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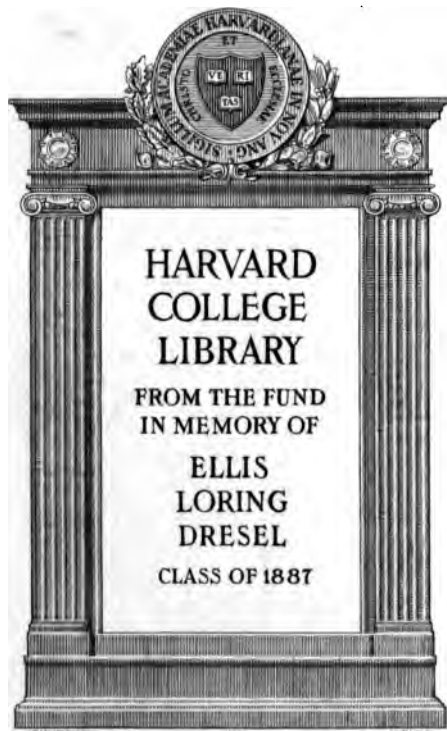
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MINNA VON BARNHELM //

OR

SOLDIER'S FORTUNE

BY

GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM LESSING

TRANSLATED BY

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NEW YORK

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On

GENEVIEVE, LADY WATSON

THE TRANSLATOR DEDICATES HIS WORK IN
TOKEN OF HIS UNALTERABLE FRIENDSHIP

Francisca. Surely it is no sin
in this country to come
from Saxony?

Landlord. A sin? The Lord
forbid! that would be a
brand new sin indeed!

Minna von Barnhelm,
ACT II, SC. 2.

PREFACE

Although *Minna von Barnhelm* ranks undisputedly as the most perfect comedy in the German language, it has heretofore failed to receive from translators into English the reverential consideration to which as a great classic it is duly entitled. The present work strives towards the ideals of a perfect translation. No time or labor has been spared to reproduce with the utmost accuracy the spirit as well as the letter of the original, by scrupulous attention both to style and to meaning. At no stage of the work has it been forgotten that the play was couched by its author in the German diction of the eighteenth century; nor, on the other hand, has its surprising essential modernness been disregarded. The translation, accordingly, has endeavored to combine with complete piety for the original text the fullest possible regard for the integrity of English idiom, in other words, to mitigate extreme linguistic fidelity before the superior claim of practical and artistic considerations. / It may be said without undue self-complacency that the occasional deviations from absolute literalness are in no case brought

about by misapprehension of Lessing's own language.

The translator has derived much benefit from various sources of counsel and assistance. The work of the students in one of his classes, in several successive years, offered numerous helpful suggestions for which he wishes to express his sincere thanks to past and present members of "German 11" at Washington University. For loyal assistance in the sifting of a great mass of material he is greatly indebted to Miss Nestor M. Thompson. Most of all his thanks are due to his colleague Professor Garnett G. Sedgewick for invaluable service rendered by a keenly critical examination of the entire translation and for the resultant improvement both in respect of accuracy and of fluency.

OTTO HELLER.

Washington University,
March, 1917.

and sweeping power as beneficial as they were unlooked for.

Yet the peculiar significance of Lessing in that new era of affluence will be more suitably indicated through another symbol. His prime function may be likened to the work of the mint: Lessing is the receiver of the golden treasures transmitted by the past and he it is that passes them on to all future, but not until he has made them truly his own, liquefied and hardened them again by unique processes of the intellect, and put on the new product the unmistakable stamp which confers worth and credit in the modern world.

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, born January 22, 1729, in the small Saxonian town of Kamenz, came of "ministerial stock," and was himself destined for the ministry, largely on account of the extraordinary mental faculties which he displayed almost from infancy. His industry and acquisitive zeal were served by an intellect as bright as steel and an infallible memory. Of course, little Gotthold did not escape the priggishness natural in a true *enfant prodige*. At the mature age of six, when posing for a portrait, he was not content to nurse an open folio in his lap; he must, besides, recline on a pile of big volumes from

the paternal library, presumably in token of his bookish leanings.

He was twelve years of age when received as a beneficiary into the famous *Fürstenschule*,¹ named for St. Afra, at Meissen. During the five years of residence there he distinguished himself so greatly both by ability and by application to the routine of the classroom and to self-culture that the headmaster not ineptly compared him to a horse that required double rations. The curriculum of those days was hardly calculated to satisfy the needs of a mind so alert and versatile. But it was young Lessing's good fortune to find at this formative period of life a wise guide and counsellor in one of his teachers, Professor Klimm. The occasion does not permit an inspection of Lessing's earliest studies. Latin and mathematics absorbed most of his time and interest.

Nor have we time to pass in review the first products of the earnest young student's scientific and poetical endeavor. Suffice it to say with regard to the former that his writings evinced, as a whole, an astonishing familiarity with the

¹ There were three such "prince's schools" in Saxony, so called because they were founded by Duke Maurice of Saxony: Meissen and Pforta, opened in 1543, and Grimma, opened in 1550.

metaphysical speculations of those days; and that they show also to a marked degree the wonderful expository power and the command of a clear, simple, and forcible style which eventually made of him the most formidable opponent of every false pretense and of any half-truth sailing under the flag of science. As to his beginnings in the strictly literary field, young Lessing was especially prolific in dramatic schemes, despite his utter ignorance of the theatre and his extremely slight acquaintance with life itself. However, the schooldays saw but one of the projected plays completed: *Damon, oder Die wahre Freundschaft*.¹

The events of the seven years' war shortened Gotthold's term of preparation for the university. After delivering a Latin valedictory address, "On the Mathematics of the Barbarians," and after undergoing the greater agony of a retort in German verse by a fellow graduate "On the Mathematical Attainments of — (*mirabile dictu!*) — Insects," Lessing was graduated, June 30, 1746, in the eighteenth year of his age.

Soon after that he matriculated at Leipsic, which city was at that time the nearest German

¹ *Damon, or True Friendship*. It was printed 1747 in the *Ermunterungen zum Vergnügen des Gemüts*.

approach to a metropolis, save, perhaps, Vienna. The student's encomium in Goethe's *Faust*,

*Es ist ein klein Paris und bildet seine Leute,*¹

bespeaks the high civilizing value accredited to a prolonged residence in that town. The chief luminaries in the world of science and letters were connected with its ancient university. Most brightly of all shone the fame of Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700-1766) and of Christian Fürchtegott Gellert (1715-1769). Gottsched had just reached the zenith of his influence and power in the domain of letters. Gellert, too, was now garnering, in the harvest of a popularity bordering on idolatry, the sentimental fruit his tearful philistinism had sown and copiously watered. To a person even slightly acquainted with the history of European literature these facts are eloquently significant of the state of literary affairs.

In accordance with a practice by no means extinct yet among German students Lessing devoted himself in his first semester far more to the enjoyment of his newly acquired academic freedom, and, being a healthy and very sociable lad, to the cultivation of social and athletic accomplishments, than to professors, lectures,

¹ It (Leipsic) is a Little Paris and gives polish to its people.

theological books. Yet, on the other hand, did not swerve from his most congenial pursuit; and that, even at this freshman time, con-
ced in study. Then, too, he obeyed the
rings of his creative genius. We have already
ded to the dramatic proclivities of the
issen schoolboy. Leipsic supplied the bud-
g dramatist with the final ferment, for here,
his joy, he found a real theatre. Its manager
; Frau Friederike Karoline Neuber (1697-
0), generally known as "die Neuberin," a
nan of superior qualities, conspicuous in the
tory of German culture as a sane reformer of
stage. In return for his services as transla-
and adapter of plays written in foreign
guages she allowed Lessing free admission
all performances, an opportunity he utilized
roughly to familiarize himself with practical
ge-craft. The assertion of his talents as an
ginal playwright followed as a matter of
rse. The reception accorded his comedy,
junge Gelehrte,¹ in January, 1748, confirmed
in his purpose to become "the German
lière." For at this time, when he had not
conceived any dramatic theories of his own,
accepted unreservedly the methods and man-
of French comedy writers: de l'Isle, Mari-

¹ The Young Pedant.

vaux, but notably Molière, and applied them to his own work.

Der junge Gelehrte rises high above the merit of Lessing's other Leipsic comedies, largely because it is the only one among them for which personal experience had, in a measure at least, furnished the material. The bloated arrogance of the leading character is meant to caricature the conceit so often met with among young academicians; at the same time it is a capital piece of retrospective self-persiflage. Another play that belongs to about the same period, *Die Juden*,¹ calls for passing mention, mainly, because by its dauntless generosity towards a universally outlawed race it shows us the future champion of justice in the very act of earning his spurs.

Even more conventional than the several dramatic attempts are the lyric compositions of the Leipsic days, later on published under the very appropriate title of *Kleinigkeiten*.² These are not outbursts of flaming passion such as we might expect from a young poet, but rather the normal offspring of the fashionable

¹ The Jews. It was completed in 1749 and first printed in 1754 in part iv of *Lessing's Schriften*.

² Trifles. Printed in 1751, but many of them had been published before appearing in the collection.

union between elegance and wit, "anacreontic" glorifications, that is, of wine, women, and song. For this jejune poetical cant he pleads forgiveness with Martial: *Vita verecunda est, musa jocosa mihi* ¹ — a very lame excuse, it is true; but let us remember that even Goethe, who, unlike Lessing, was a born lyricist, did not withhold his tribute from the seductive "jocose muse" of Hagedorn, Gleim, and Uz. As for Lessing, his true critical sense compelled him soon to abstain from the vapid makebelieve, and led him to recognize, at the same time, that he lacked the necessary equipment for a serious lyric poet. A poet in the too restricted sense in which the word is used in English ² Lessing was not. One of the best proofs of this is his surprisingly poor endowment in "nature-sense." He knew not the inspiration that comes from mystic communion with nature. Her changeful aspects did not reveal to him their wealth of meaning. To his eye, otherwise so keen, woods and hillocks and flowered fields did not betray their protean moods; his inner ear was deaf to the eloquence of rill and rivulet. As to the

¹ The sense is: Life I regard as deeply serious, but my verse is gay.

² The German *Dichter* applies to a writer of high order within any literary genre.

question of his poetic capacity we must defer to the analysis of the self-knowing critic, notwithstanding the many arguments to the contrary. No account of Lessing, therefore, should omit the following lines, taken from the concluding part of the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*.¹

"People often do me the honor to recognize me as a poet. But only because they do not understand me. They ought not to draw such generous conclusions from some dramatic attempts I have made. Not every one who takes the brush in hand and scatters colors is a painter. The older of those attempts were written in the years in which one so gladly takes pleasure and facility for genius. With respect to what is tolerable in my more recent efforts, I am conscious that I owe it solely to criticism. I do not feel in me the living fountain which works upwards by its own strength, shoots up by its own strength into such rich, such fresh, such pure streams; I must force everything out of me by the flypress and pipes. I should be so poor, so cold, so shortsighted, if I had not to some extent learned modestly to borrow treasures from

¹ The Hamburg Dramaturgy. The passage is found in vol. x, pp. 209, 210 of the great critical edition (Lachmann-Muncker) of Lessing's works. To this edition refer the numbers of vol. and p. quoted in this introduction.

others, to warm myself at others' fires, and by the glasses of art to strengthen my eyes. I have, therefore, always felt ashamed and out of humor when I have read or heard anything to the disadvantage of criticism. It is said to hamper genius, and I flattered myself that I owed to it something which comes very near genius. I am a cripple whom a lampoon upon crutches cannot possibly edify." ¹

Only one qualification of this pitiless self-analysis need be made. Lessing's works, it is perfectly true, lack spontaneity. Nevertheless, the undamaged freshness and charm that cling to *Minna von Barnhelm* and *Nathan der Weise* after the lapse of almost one and a half centuries give conclusive proof that to Lessing criticism was far more than crutches are to a cripple. To put it plainly: in this case the critical faculty was not a mere makeshift for genius; itself amounted to a variant form of genius. Not only in his best plays, but even in his theoretical and speculative writings, Lessing's critical ability rises to this rare power. While these works open the eyes of mankind to new visions of truth and beauty, their brilliant and pungent diction at the same time sets a new highwater mark for German prose.

¹ Transl. by James Sime, in *Lessing*, vol. ii, pp. 52, 53.

We have watched the young theologian straying into forbidden paths. We shall not be surprised to learn with what dismay his infatuation for the stage and his intimate association with the actor folk were viewed in the quiet parsonage at Kamenz. Hither Gotthold was recalled by the mortified Pastor Primarius,¹ his father.

The prodigal's robust health of mind and body happily dispelled the fearful anticipations of his stern parent. Even his Christian faith proved, in the main, unimpaired. On the other hand, the father had to face a great disappointment when Gotthold frankly announced his determination to abandon the ancestral vocation. Little did the excellent divine dream that his son, even though he was never to be fortified with holy orders, would eventually advance theological knowledge by his pioneer work in higher biblical criticism.

Upon returning to the university young Lessing transferred his dubious fealty from the divinity to the medical department. As for the results, truth compels us to confess that within the whole range of the knowable it would not be easy to name a subject regarding which Lessing remained throughout his life as densely ignorant as he was of medicine and surgery.

¹ Head Pastor.

It is a consoling thought that, at least, he did not waste much time in trying to conquer a task to him so uncongenial.

The removal of his companion Christlob Mylius (1722-1754), a young disciple of science fatally gifted with a roving disposition, and the adversities that befell and soon broke up Frau Neuber's theatre, robbed the "Little Paris" of much of its attractiveness for Lessing. His resolution to decamp was hastened by the fear of being clapped into a debtor's prison for the unpaid scores of his actor friends. So Lessing started for Berlin to make his way as a man of letters. It is pathetic enough to reflect that from now to the bitter end he was to pursue fortune in vain; that he was to be spared none of the pangs of irking poverty; that for the solid wealth by which he enriched human culture the world never made him enough material return to free him from sordid care.

Arriving in Berlin (1749) after an involuntary delay at Wittenberg, Lessing plunged boldly into his chosen life. By the aid of the faithful Mylius a first foothold was gained, even though the work was neither lucrative nor especially dignified. It consisted for the most part in making German translations to order — hack

work, to be sure, but one which Lessing greatly ennobled by his thoroughness and high intelligence. Perhaps he may be called, without undue exaggeration, the first discoverer of the key which unlocked to Germans the literary treasures of all peoples. By this time Lessing had acquired an adequate knowledge of Latin, Greek, French, Italian, Spanish, English, and Dutch, which he put to admirable practical use. Meanwhile his greatest hopes remained fixed on the drama. In 1750 he started, with Mylius, the *Beiträge zur Historie und Aufnahme des Theaters*.¹ In this shortlived periodical he published an excellent translation of the "Captivi." The accompanying critical essay on that Plautinian comedy holds the germs of some of his most fruitful dramaturgical notions. A number of plays planned or even begun before the removal from Leipsic were now finished, but with the exception of *Die alte Jungfer* ² they were not put into print.³

¹ Contributions to the History and Improvement of the Theatre.

² The Old Maid. Published 1749.

³ The contemplated first volume of dramatic works was to contain *Der junge Gelehrte*, *Die alte Jungfer*, *Die Stärke der Einbildung* (The Force of Imagination), *Weiber sind Weiber* (Women are Women), *Der Jude*, and *Der Freigeist* (The Freethinker).

Of new dramatic concepts the most noteworthy is *Henzi*, although only a fragment of it was fashioned (1749). For, in the first place, it is unmistakably touched by Shakespeare's influence, and thereby foreshadows the coming transition of the German drama from Romanic to Germanic allegiance. In the second place, the plot deals with real contemporaneous events, and that constituted an unprecedented temerity.

Already Lessing's word carried considerable authority in matters of literature. From 1751 his wide and profound scholarship made itself felt through the columns of the *Vossische Zeitung*.¹ The tone of his numerous book reviews and other critical contributions was refreshing in its independence. With robust force he inveighed against the clannishness of the two opposing schools, the Swiss and the Saxon, and in pointing out the shameful want of patronage for German letters made a first assault against the noxious Gallomania of the higher classes. Heartily he greeted Klopstock's *Messias* as a deliverance from the literary overlordship of the French, albeit he was not blind to the dangers that lurked in the unchecked emotionalism of that remarkable epic.

¹ Voss's Gazette; to this day one of the most influential newspapers of Germany.

Towards the end of 1751 Lessing went to Wittenberg to acquire a university diploma and by this means qualify himself for some official station. In April of the following year he attained the degree of Master of Arts. But he had spoilt his chances of preferment by a reprehensible bit of carelessness. Through failure to return promptly a borrowed set of the advance sheets of Voltaire's latest book he had drawn upon himself the vengeance of king Frederick's powerful friend. The monarch's own mind was so effectively poisoned against the rising scholar that all hope of employment in the Royal Prussian service was foredoomed to disappointment. If thus Lessing was thwarted in the object that took him to Wittenberg he was yet greatly benefited by his sojourn there. In that citadel of the Reformation he laid the foundation for the truly encyclopedic theological learning which afterwards facilitated his triumphs over some of the most redoubtable churchmen of the age. The motive which underlay the enormous amount of his reading in what was now outside his professional field was that he might convert his inherited religion into a personal acquisition. He wanted to rebuild his Christian belief on the rock of Reason. Nothing could be more characteristic for his cast of mind.

For, according to his favorite conviction, the highest privilege of mortals is not the unquestioning possession of Truth; the pursuit of truth is even more to be treasured than its grasp. "Not the truth which a man possesses, or thinks he possesses, but the sincere endeavor which he has used to come at the truth, makes the worth of the man. For not through the possession of truth, but through the search for it, are those powers expanded in which alone his ever-growing perfection consists. Possession makes restful, indolent, proud. . . . If God were to hold in His right hand all truth, and in His left the single ever-living impulse to seek for truth, though coupled with the condition of eternal error, and should say to me, 'Choose!' I would humbly seize His left hand, and say, 'Father, give! Pure truth is, after all, for Thee alone.'" ¹

This eager pursuit of truth was congenially coupled with a passionate sense of justice. Knowing Lessing it is easy to understand that, whenever in the course of his studies he found any past fellow-seeker for truth to have been wrongly condemned, he would not rest till the false judgment was reversed and the obloquy

¹ From the *Duplik* in the controversy with Goeze. *Works*, vol. xiii, pp. 23, 24. The above translation is taken from Rolleston's *Life of Lessing*.

that ages had heaped on the client's memory removed. To this gallant spirit we owe the *Rettungen*¹ of a number of forceful historic personages.

In the meantime the classical studies were not slighted for the theological. Among other subjects we find Lessing intensely occupied with antique epigrams and trying to evolve their theory. And since it was characteristic of him not to be content with the elaboration of a theory, but to apply it at once to practical work, we find him composing many ingenious *Sinn-gedichte*² of his own.

Because he was signally earnest and honest in all his own work, the young scholar was easily roused to ire by the slipshod performances of others. A certain Pastor Lange had received with ill grace the well-deserved strictures Lessing made upon the pastor's blundering translation of Horace. Lange even impugned the critic's personal honesty, insinuating blackmail as the

¹ Vindications. They were published in 1754. See *Works*, vol. v, p. 273 ff. The characters vindicated are those of Horace, Hieronymus Cardanus, the unknown author of the "Ineptus Religiosus," and Cochlaeus.

² Epigrams. Lessing's Epigrams were written partly in 1753, partly not till 1771. They may be found in *Works*, vol. i. The *Zerstreute Anmerkungen über das Epigramm* (1771) are in vol. xi, p. 214 ff.

real motive of the attack. Not long after his return from Wittenberg Lessing proceeded with the castigation and execution of the calumniator. The pages of *Ein Vademecum für Herrn Pastor Lange*¹ are strewn with the débris of that glib pretender's eminent reputation for scholarship.

Besides resuming his multifarious journalistic duties Lessing prepared a collection of his writings for the printer.²

After the untimely death of Mylius (1754) Lessing, although by this time acquainted with nearly all the distinguished literati of Berlin, had only two intimate companions: a philosophically minded Jewish clerk, Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786), and another young business man, Christoph Friedrich Nicolai (1733-1811); both were self-taught scholars, widely read, and both disciples (Nicolai the more ardent) of Rationalism. Mendelssohn, of a shy and retiring nature, the son of an intimidated race, mostly centered his efforts on self-culture and the education of his coreligionists. Nicolai, breezy, bustling, emphatic, was the born agitator and reformer. The incessant debate on philosophic

¹ A Companion for Pastor Lange. The pamphlet was issued in 1754.

² Vol. i appeared in 1753, vol. ii in 1755.

questions between Lessing and Mendelssohn led to the writing of a joint essay, *Pope ein Metaphysiker!*¹ (1755), written in mock competition for a prize offered by the Berlin Academy of Sciences. Lessing, for the treatise is essentially his work, esteems Pope highly as a poet, but repudiates him as a systematic philosopher and even asserts that systematic philosophy is incompatible with the nature of poetry.

In the *Theatralische Bibliothek*² (1754-1758), a magazine of which only four instalments appeared, the efforts of the dramatic reformer exhibit increasing strength and weight. Already he shows himself in familiar sympathy with an altogether new conception of the drama, one which differs radically from the approved French and pseudo-classic German pattern. Ground for the new "Middle-Class Tragedy" was broken when people realized the fallacy of the time-hallowed doctrine that the tragic muse has ears only for the joys and woes of the mighty. Significantly, it was in England, with its increasing democracy of feeling, that the tragical note of humbler life was first sounded from the stage, in George Lillo's (1693-1739) tragedy, *The London Merchant, or The History*

¹ Pope a Metaphysician!

² Theatrical Library.

of *George Barnwell* (1731). The incipient "bourgeois" tendency in literature was re-enforced shortly afterwards by the novels of Samuel Richardson (1689-1761). The sympathy with it, to which Lessing confesses in the *Theatralische Bibliothek*, is practically demonstrated in his "Bürgerliches Trauerspiel,"¹ *Miss Sara Sampson* (1755). The weaknesses of the play are glaring and fatal. To mention only the two most obvious shortcomings: the tragical outcome is not ineradicably grounded in the nature of the conflicts, it is, rather, brought on by a special permit, granted, so to speak, by the author to the "leading man" to commit an inexcusable piece of folly.² Again, the dramatis personæ are for the most part stereotyped, and that from patterns used in an alien literature. Indeed, the environment in which these people have their being is too unfamiliar to the playwright himself to be in the least convincing to his audience. Nevertheless, *Miss Sara Sampson* marked a long stride forward, not only for the author, but in the general progress of the German theatre. It inaugurated an era of greater naturalness, of truer sentiment, even though its

¹ *Bourgeois Tragedy*.

² The confrontation of the guileless heroine, Sara, with her implacable rival, the tempestuous Marwood, is meant.

prolonged moralizings would seem to have partly defeated that purpose. At all events *Miss Sara Sampson* made a great hit with the German public, so that Lessing's hope of popular success took fresh hold. This fact, together with the nomadic streak in his temperament, explains why suddenly, without leave-taking of his friends, he went back to Leipsic, where the actor-manager, Heinrich Gottfried Koch (1703-1775), had just opened a new theatre.

But before he had fairly entered upon new dramatic work there was offered Lessing (1755) the tempting opportunity of learning, through experience, somewhat more of actual life. Of this, as a dramatist, he strongly felt the need. He was to go on a three-years' journey, as a companion and species of traveling tutor to a wealthy young Saxon. The project, however, was given up, owing to the outbreak of the (Seven Years') war when the two had proceeded leisurely as far as Amsterdam. They returned to Leipsic, where Lessing gave great offence to his young employer by his "unpatriotic" association with the officers of the invading Prussian army. The agreement was repudiated, and again Lessing lived from hand to mouth, pending the decision of the laysuit which he instituted for non-fulfillment of contract.

His most absorbing thoughts in this interim concerned the purpose of tragedy as set forth by Aristotle, of whose works — the "Ethics" and the "Rhetoric," as well as the "Poetics" — he made a thoroughgoing study. In view of the fact that his subsequent work as a playwright and dramaturgist is so largely based on the teachings of Aristotle we must briefly consider what opinion Lessing held at this stage of his development regarding the cardinal Aristotelian definition that tragedy is a means "through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions."¹

Tragedy, so Lessing interprets his Greek master, has the esthetic purpose of awakening the dormant fear and pity in the souls of the spectators. Since fear, however, or pity, takes possession of us according as one and the same misfortune or peril hangs either over ourselves

¹ From chap. vi of the "Poetics." See S. H. Butcher's translation (opposite the Greek text), p. 22, l. 28, 29. The original phrasing, δι' ἐλέου καὶ φόβου περαίνουσα τὴν τῶν τοιούτων παθημάτων κάθαρσιν permitted of several sense-perverting mistranslations. So, especially, the φόβος in the above definition had been taken to mean *terror*, which led to an unjustifiable devotion to the truculent. Lessing determined the true meaning by comparison with the philosopher's own acceptance of the term in chaps. v and viii of the "Rhetoric." Cf. on this point Lessing's *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, 75. *Stück*.

or over some fellow creature, they may be regarded as the duplex manifestation of a *πάθημα*, i. e., emotion, single in the last analysis and everpresent in a latent state.

Besides furthering by his reading *φόβος* = fear a truer observance of the Aristotelian precept, Lessing also takes a step in advance of the master. According to the latter, the tragic hero should be neither utterly wicked nor yet quite perfect. For if we feel that his sufferings are deserved, we deny him our commiseration. If, on the other hand, he be altogether blameless, our outraged sense of justice turns pity into disgust. Lessing offers a more convincing reason why the tragic hero should not be invested with a wholly irreproachable character; it is "because without the fault which draws down the misfortune upon him his character and his misfortune would not make a *whole*, since the one would not be grounded in the other, and we should conceive each of these two elements apart from the other." ¹

The complexity of character requisite for the leading figure of a tragedy was later on demonstrated in *Emilia Galotti*.² The transient res-

¹ In a letter to Mendelssohn, Dec. 18, 1756. Works, xvii, p. 85. The translation is Sime's, vol. i, p. 153.

² The beginnings of this drama belong to the years 1757 and

idence at Leipsic was not to be a creative phase to any such remarkable degree.

In the spring of 1758 Lessing rejoined his friends in Berlin and entered into some interesting literary partnerships. In conjunction with Karl Wilhelm Ramler (1748-1790) he edited the epigrams of Friedrich von Logau (1604-1655), to whom he felt himself attracted by a certain spiritual affinity. He also published the collection of *Preussische Kriegslieder von einem Grenadier*.¹ Of much greater importance proved the coöperation in a scheme proposed by the enterprising Nicolai. The plan was to help educate public opinion through a series of thoughtful articles on current literature. These articles appeared at irregular intervals in the form of letters nominally addressed to a wounded Prussian officer. The three critics — for Mendelssohn was a party to the scheme — had only to think of their friend, the noble soldier poet, Ewald Christian von Kleist (1715-1759), to

1758, but the work was not pushed till much later. See pp. lxi-lxiii of this Introduction.

¹ Prussian War Songs, by a Grenadier. The author of these poems was Johann Ludwig Gleim. They mark an epoch in German lyric art by voicing the spirit of the new Frederician era and by their, not sufficiently successful, effort to strike a popular tone.

lend a measure of actuality to the fictitious correspondence. The names of the writers were not divulged, so that the letters were at first appraised solely on their merits. On the whole they may be treated as Lessing's, so great was his influence on the performances of his two collaborators. Everywhere they bear the stamp of the perfect workmanship Lessing had now — at the age of thirty — attained.

Mr. Sime rightly points out that these *Briefe, die neueste Literatur betreffend* ¹ turned out to be the only work of its day "which was destined to go down with honor to posterity." ² Their general drift, therefore, should be indicated in a few words. They plead for the highest attainable standard in translating foreign masterpieces into German. With equal emphasis they inveigh against diffuseness, turgidity, and flippancy, against superficiality, prevarication, and all other forms of dishonesty. Above all things they denounce the slavish imitation of foreign ways. Lessing insists that German writers must hark back to their own national genius and declares that Gottsched, in his well-intentioned fury clearing the German stage of its atrocities

¹ Letters Relating to the Latest Literature. They appeared 1759-1765 and were first published in book form in 1766.

² Lessing, vol. i, p. 172.

had really done incalculable harm, because with the trash and rubbish of Shrovetide farce and melodrama he had swept away some priceless national heirlooms in order to make room for imported trumpery. True, the Germans must seek their teachers abroad; but not to France should they look for them, but to England, since the English are racially much nearer to them than a Latin people. And where could such magnificent models be found as in the England of Queen Elizabeth? The greatness of Shakespeare is fully realized by Lessing;¹ herein he was the first in Germany, and even in Shakespeare's own country no one, since the Puritan ascendancy, had proclaimed Shakespeare's superiority in such positive terms. Shakespeare, though ignorant of the ancients and their precepts, scaled to heights such as only they had reached. Was peradventure Aristotle in the wrong? Not at all:—the French and their imitators had simply missed the central lesson of his dramaturgy, which does not lie, as they thought, in the mechanical arrangements of tragedy.

In a way the "Literary Letters," as they are commonly called, epitomize or foreshadow

¹ *E. g.*, in the fifty-first letter, where Shakespeare's diction is discussed.

Lessing's whole critical career. Besides the subjects already indicated they discuss educational and moral problems; even theological ones are touched upon. Of course, the enlightening ideas to which Lessing gives utterance in so many places are not always original with him. The air was full of such thoughts. It was one of Lessing's greatest merits that he was quick to seize upon the vaguely felt notions of his time and bold enough to give them currency. To quote Macaulay, he influenced his age because he was influenced by his age.

It remains to mention, for the period under consideration, some other writings, produced without the aid and coöperation of others.

In 1759 Lessing published a book of fables in prose and an exhaustive treatise on the fable, which genre was in great vogue throughout the greater part of the eighteenth century;¹ pursuant to his conception of a fable he abandoned in his own efforts the higher graces of style and focused his whole attention on the moral lesson. Next to be mentioned is the scene from *Faust*, instanced in the seventeenth "literary letter" as a specimen of an alleged old

¹ In 1753 Lessing published a set of fables in rime and prose. See Works, vol. I.

folk-drama. As a matter of fact, it is a fragment of one of the two dramatic versions of that ancient theme which, at various times, Lessing contemplated working out. Likewise a one-act play belongs to this phase of Lessing's activity. *Philotas* (1759), by its stern heroism and its swift-moving action, is quite at variance with its author's earlier works, notably with *Miss Sara Sampson*, and yet it cannot be truly said to mark any real advance. For *Philotas* is declamatory and one-sided in its ethics, unreasonable in its logic, and in its motivation altogether too remote from modern sentiment. *Philotas* was calculated to raise the suspicion that Lessing's extensive and intensive study of the Greek tragedians might destroy his artistic independence.

In the same year in which this war tragedy was created a real tragedy of the war robbed Lessing of his beloved Kleist, whose self-forgetful generosity, lofty sense of duty, and intrepid manliness admirably coupled with an almost feminine delicacy of feeling still hovered vividly in Lessing's memory when, not long afterward, he drew, in his *Minna von Barnhelm*, the noble figure of that military idealist, Major von Tellheim.

In the year 1760 Lessing again quitted Berlin

to fill the post of private secretary to General F. B. von Tauentzien (1710–1791), Prussian governor of Breslau, the Silesian capital. The change was one from the world of books to that of affairs, and for a period of four years Lessing had to relegate his literary work to a place of second importance. Yet amid the press and drudgery of business and the nocturnal hubbub of social gayety two immortally great works were prepared, as will be seen later. His position suited him well enough, on account of its ample emoluments. What an irony of fate that the most erudite man of his country was placed beyond immediate need, for the first time in his life, by tenure of a military office! Lessing now lived generously, helped his hard-pressed parents, and fast accumulated a fine library. So he remained in his secretarial station even after peace had been made (1763), in the hope of promotion, which, however, proved vain.

Towards the close of 1763 the foundations of the *Laokoon* seem to have been laid. The inspiration came, as was so often the case with Lessing, from the close study of certain treatises on art, principally the pioneer work of Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–1768), *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke*

in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst (1755).¹ Probably the immediate point of departure was supplied by two foreign treatises, the *Tableaux tirés de l'Iliade et de l'Odyssée d'Homère*,² by Count Philippe de Caylus (1692–1765), and the *Polymetis*³ (1747) of Joseph Spence (1699–1768).

In the spring of the succeeding year Lessing set earnestly to work upon *Minna von Barnhelm*, the first play, apart from the *Henzi* fragment, in which a conscientious attempt is made to environ realistically a contemporaneous plot. The play, however, was not soon to be finished.

True to his migratory disposition, Lessing moved back to Berlin in May, 1765. His friends' efforts to secure for him the appointment as librarian to the king were frustrated by Frederick's recollection of that altercation with

¹ "Reflections Concerning the Imitation of the Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture."

² "Paintings drawn from the Iliad and the Odyssey of Homer." Caylus in all his antiquarian writings is a glorifier of Hellenism.

³ "Polymetis, or an Enquiry Concerning the Agreement Between the Works of the Roman Poets and the Remains of the Ancient Artists." This is a treatise on classical mythology as illustrated by ancient works of art and Latin writers. In contrast with Caylus, Spence totally neglects the Greek authors.

Voltaire. Some less agreeable positions that offered Lessing declined, for he felt the need of rallying his whole strength to the execution of his critical *chef d'oeuvre*. The *Laokoon* was growing under his hands from a specific antiquarian disquisition to a full-fledged code of art.

The first part of this momentous work appeared in the spring of 1766, under the title *Laokoon, oder über die Grenzen der Dichtung und Malerei*.¹ Its greatest service to modern culture consisted in the putting an end to the noxious confusion of the fine arts with "poetry," by which latter term were comprised all forms of literary art. Even Winckelmann, with his splendid esthetic insight, shared the fallacious doctrine of the day in reference to the close affinity of poetry and painting. It is true that in the first half of the century attempts had been made, notably by the Earl of Shaftesbury (1671–1713), James Harris (1709–1780),² and Denis Diderot (1713–1784), to correct, or, better, to modify the general belief, supported by the elaborate theories of Johânn Jakob Bodmer (1698–1783) and Johann Jakob Breitinger

¹ "Laocoon, or Concerning the Demarcations of Poetry and Painting."

² "Music, Painting, and Poetry" (1774).

(1701-1774), in the truth of the Horatian assertion "Ut pictura poesis"¹ and in the bon mot of Simonides that "painting is silent poetry, and poetry a speaking manner of painting."² Yet it was reserved for Lessing definitely to clear the views.

The name of his great work suggested itself to Lessing in his meditations upon Winckelmann's *Gedanken etc.* which, it will be recalled, by its very title held up the Greeks as models for imitation.³ In setting forth with inspired eloquence the perfection of Periclean art, and summing up its secrets in the two words, Simplicity and Grandeur, Winckelmann acknowledges no difference between the aims and means of the sculptor and those of the poet. He holds that every art work, to whatever category it belong, is to be appraised according to the measure in which it conforms to those two essentials. Comparing the famous marble group which represents the Trojan high priest Laocoon, expiring with his sons in the strangling constrictions of huge serpents, with the poetic account of the

¹ Poetry is like Painting.

² Preserved in Plutarch.

³ Before the completion of Lessing's *Laocoon*, the magnum opus of Winckelmann, his *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums* (History of the Art of the Ancients), appeared (1764). But it was consulted only for that portion of *Laocoon* following chapter xxv.

same episode in Vergil,¹ Winckelmann motivates his preference for the sculptured Laocoon by the latter's greater stoicism. A man writhing in agony or shrieking with pain would not, so he thinks, have appealed to the heroic sense of the Hellenes — hence no true Greek artist would have lent his hand to perpetuate so ignoble a spectacle.

Soon after the appearance of Winckelmann's *Gedanken* the contents formed the basis of an interesting correspondence between Lessing and Moses Mendelssohn. The relative value of the two representations of Laocoon was keenly discussed. It was Moses who became Lessing's predecessor in the rational classification of the arts by discerning that poetry (= letters) is the art of the successive (*Nacheinander*), painting (= fine arts) the art of the simultaneous (*Nebeneinander*).² In this esthetic dissociation lies undoubtedly the germ of Lessing's ingenious work,³ and it is meet that Mendelssohn's share in it be more fully recognized.

In the *Laokoon* Lessing took definite issue with Winckelmann's dictum that Vergil, by de-

¹ *Æneid*, Book II, ll. 199–231.

² See Moses' letter to Lessing of December, 1756, *Works*, vol. xix, p. 56 f., and following letters.

³ See Erich Schmidt, *Lessing*, vol. ii, pp. 4 and 5.

parting in his depiction of Laocoon's agony from the calm heroism demanded by the Hellenic taste, had sacrificed the sublime beauty of the victim's character, compromised his moral fortitude, and thus succeeded at most in producing a work of the second order. Progressing along the line of thought suggested by Moses, Lessing claimed the discrepancy between the two portrayals of Laocoon sprang not from different moral conceptions, but from the heterogeneous natures of the two arts. After showing by a study of the Sophoclean *Philoctetes* that, contrary to Winckelmann's assertion, the Greek mind did not recoil from even the most harrowing exhibition of physical pain in tragedy, Lessing freely admits that within the province of the fine arts, but only within it, excessive demonstrations of distress were barred. It is seen that, so far as the fine arts are concerned, Lessing was in agreement with Winckelmann. And it may be added that in this respect he became just as stubborn and onesided an advocate of "Hellenism" as the former, — so that his utterances bearing on the plastic, and more particularly on the graphic, arts are no longer to be upheld as canonical. According to Lessing nothing other than the beautiful is fit for a picture or a piece of statuary. If Laocoon was to

be hewn in marble at all he could not be shown with face and form all distorted in agony. The artist was bound to present his tortures at a moment of relative latency. That "moment," moreover, must be chosen with a care for two essentials. In the first place, it must be capable of some stability,¹ for the eye could not dwell with patience on a pronouncedly furtive physical reaction, even if the artist should succeed in petrifying it despite its evanescence.² In the second place, the situation selected must be pregnant with the sequel,³ so that the beholder's imagination is naturally directed to the ensuing catastrophe.

So much for Lessing's views on the range of subjects for sculpture and painting. Having

¹ It is seen that the word "moment" is used loosely. It is here adopted because it was employed in the above sense not only by Lessing, but likewise by Mendelssohn, who laid stress, in the correspondence referred to, on the "favorable moment" upon which the artist should seize, and by Diderot, to whom belongs the priority of the thought. The Frenchman applies to that desirable moment the epithets "indivisible" and "frappant" (indivisible and striking). See Erich Schmidt's *Lessing*, vol. ii, p. 42 f.

² Modern practice and to some extent modern theory, too, take exception to Lessing's dogmatism. It is maintained that even the most transient situation is available for the artist. It all depends on the particular problem and, of course, on the individual technic.

³ Hence, *fruchtbarer* (fecund) *Augenblick*.

expressed these, he rides straight against the general confusion of the arts. In the sixteenth chapter¹ he offers the quintessence of a new disjunctive theory evolved "from first causes": "Objects which exist side by side, or whose parts exist side by side, are called bodies. Accordingly, bodies with their visible qualities are the proper objects of Painting (= the fine arts). Objects which succeed one another, or whose parts succeed one another, are called in a general way actions. Accordingly, actions are the proper objects of Poetry (= letters)."

In drawing so severe a distinction Lessing is not oblivious of the fact that the two categories, while being fundamentally separate, yet overlap one another. That is to say, each order of art may assume, in a measure, the function that primarily belongs to the other order: Painting may describe actions, Poetry bodies. But, Lessing insists, even then each art must cling to its inherent method: the painter can suggest action only through the aspect of bodies, and the poet depicts the appearance of living bodies by the aid of motion and action.²

¹ Works, vol. ix, pp. 94, 95.

² As when Homer, Iliad, Book III, ll. 146-60, intimates, by its conquering effect, the power of Helen's beauty. Lessing and Diderot both use this illustration and on the strength of

ranking first among all comedies in the German language.

The dramatic problem of *Minna von Barnhelm* is of deep ethical significance. It gravitates about the liberation of a true-hearted and supremely generous but hypochondriacal man from his besetting trouble, namely, an exorbitant feeling of honor conceived in a strictly Prussian, strictly military, and thrice impractical sense. But the play breathes a truly German spirit, not only in the dominant idea of the plot, but also in its materialization. Thereby its high place in the history of German literature is forever secured. It is, indeed, the first play wholly grounded in German life, and, more than that, in contemporaneous life. Lessing's ideal wish for a national drama is thus realized by himself, and it is no mere accident that this achievement coincides in point of time with the rise of the national consciousness that followed as the most precious fruit of Frederick's victories. Technically, too, this comedy is Lessing's dramatic masterpiece. The characters, though instinct with life, are certainly not "realistic" in the present day meaning of the term. Undeniably they are fashioned, gathered, and grouped with a visible regard for the traditions and conventions of the stage, and

in nearly all of them the "type" is just a trifle more discernible than the "individual." Yet they do not lack in convincing power, as any adequate presentation of the play will definitely prove. Furthermore, all the consequential complications in the story arise most naturally from actions and reactions of the wills — not, as happens in inferior plays, from arbitrary reasons. Nothing is said or done but what is congruous with the nature of the dramatis personæ. No less praise is due the architectural qualities of *Minna von Barnhelm*, the management of the line of action. The exposition, with which, in the main, the first two acts are charged, is very skilfully lengthened out by the casual mention of antecedent facts throughout the third, fourth, and even fifth acts. It may be that the solution of the difficulty smacks a little of the conventional. But how ably and interestingly is the situation managed to the end! With what consummate dexterity is the action removed from the path of least resistance, are new obstacles thrown, even at the eleventh hour,¹ in the way of the all-is-well conclusion, so that even the experienced play-goer is left guessing as to the issue. Most admirable, further, is the complete characterization of the Major, accom-

¹ Act V, scene 10.

plished by a truly dramatic method of indirection. Not through autobiographical monologues are we taught to love his humane and soldierly qualities; his lovable character is more persuasively indicated by the almost idolizing demeanor, towards him, of all the right-minded people in the play. Is stronger proof needed than the brute-like attachment of the rough vulgarian, Just; the blind devotion of the martial yet romantic Paul Werner, or the fond partiality of the pert, but level-headed Francisca? If so, take Minna's behavior. Her introduction is wisely delayed until the second act. Here is a gentlewoman, barely past twenty, running after a lover who has silently broken the engagement. She finds him and he remains stubborn in his resolution not to involve the woman he loves in the disgraceful ruin of his fortunes. But Minna, no less determined, bends all her resources to induce a change of mind. Now what would be our opinion of Minna had we not during the first act become almost as infatuated with her lover as she is herself? Thanks to the mode of her presentation, she obtained ready forgiveness for her more than unconventional conduct by the guardians of eighteenth century propriety. Equally, too, the modern arbiters of decorum willingly sus-

pend for Lady Minna's benefit the general rule that well-bred young ladies must not travel in pursuit of gentlemen who (with good reason or without) prefer to evade their company. But, then, Minna herself is no ordinary woman, and certainly no specimen of the female invertebrate so dearly beloved of eighteenth century writers. In comparison with Tellheim, she is undoubtedly his superior in intellect, in tact, and above all in humor. Furthermore, she has a will decidedly her own; is clever, frank, independent, sensible far beyond her years and — speaking from the too obvious point of view of her contemporaries, — far beyond her sex, self-confident, alert, and a splendid wire-puller in a good cause, withal constant, hopeful, unselfish, and, it goes without saying, beautiful, winsome — in fine, conciliatingly feminine. We may, therefore, willingly forgive her for her own sake.

Though *Minna von Barnhelm* is a comedy yet a "high and becoming seriousness" is by no means absent from it. A true humor pervades the play — the kind of which it has been said that one eye weeps while the other smiles. Thus, without being classed as a "play with a purpose," *Minna von Barnhelm* holds an impressive lesson, or, rather, several lessons.

First of all it good-naturedly shows the absurdity of a virtue carried past the bounds of reason, and, coupled therewith, the fullest human sympathy for magnanimity, misapplied from the best of motives. Besides, it pillories vulgarity and vice in two conspicuous examples: the German innkeeper and the French adventurer. At the same time it speaks out with the unequivocal emphasis of caricature against the preposterous Gallomania of German society from the king down.

Lessing's patriotism in *Minna von Barnhelm* complements the heroic labors of Frederick the Great in creating respect for the German nation. Unfortunately it was the sole example of its kind and quality, else the endeavors of the Hamburg reformers might have been productive of more immediate fruits. As it was, their venture proved shortlived. Bitterly Lessing laughed at the *gutherziger Einfall*¹ of providing the Germans with a national theatre "when we Germans are not yet a nation:" *Ich rede nicht von der politischen Verfassung, sondern von dem sittlichen Charakter.*²

¹ Naïve notion.

² "I am not speaking of the political constitution, but of the moral character." The passage is from the final chapter of the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*. Works, vol. x, p. 213.

But even though the attempt to rouse the people of Hamburg to a better appreciation of higher drama proved futile we have reason to be grateful for the experiment. Its direct result was Lessing's *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*,¹ the greatest among his critical writings. This work performed an incalculable service for the development of the modern drama. Its teachings, which are to this day regarded as authoritative in most respects, have been the chief factor in the restoration of the German stage as a higher educational institution. The great metamorphosis was accomplished by Lessing's stripping from the drama of his day the ill-fitting second-hand notions concerning the drama of the ancients, and bringing to light the thew and sinews, the flesh and blood of the art.

For nearly a hundred years the imitators of French "classicism" had held undisputed sway on the stage, solely because in certain externals they seemed to conform to the rules of Aristotle. Lessing, himself a firm believer in Aristotle, had been studying for a long time, as we saw,² the writings of that philosopher, and now in the

¹ *Hamburg Dramaturgy*, a collection of the one hundred and four articles (1767-69) written about the first fifty-two performances (1767-68). Collected the essays appeared in 1789.

² See pp. xxix, xxx of this Introduction.

light of Aristotle's true meaning, which he established with philological acumen, he was able to show that the Frenchmen had constantly been misinterpreting their master. Holding up, side by side, the vapid and bombastic tragedies of the eighteenth century, patterned so closely after the "classic" models of the seventeenth, and the incomparable masterpieces of Shakespeare, who wrought without a knowledge of Aristotle and in innocent defiance of classical requirements, Lessing concludes that the conventions do not and cannot constitute a purpose in themselves. They were contrived with the object of facilitating, under certain definite conditions of a people, the attainment of the real purpose of tragedy; but with those conditions materially changed the same purpose may be attained by entirely different technical means. The kernel of the matter, under any circumstances, lies in a true definition of the real purpose of drama.¹ As he goes on with his *Dramaturgy* Lessing shatters, one by one, the idols of the Gottschedians, and he shows up the cheap clay under their alluring polish. He states that even the great Corneille, *facile princeps* among the French tragedians, falls far short of his Greek models because he is

¹ See pp. xxix, xxx, 48 of this Introduction.

unable to grasp their natural simplicity. How much lower then are Corneille's and Racine's followers to be ranked, with their hollow grandiloquence and quibbling psychology! Lessing singles out his old enemy, Voltaire, though on purely objective grounds, as a deterrent example of harmful imitative zeal. He takes Voltaire's *Mérope* (plagiarized, he declares, from Maffei) as a concrete case by which to demonstrate that no nation has played more havoc with the precepts of Aristotle than have their self-appointed guardians.¹ Aristotle's incidental remarks had been treated by the French as his gist; the real gist has escaped them. Nay, they have not even dealt honestly with their meagre fund of knowledge. Look into the matter! First they extol the "unities" as though they were inviolable, and next we see them taking the strangest liberties with them. For the real unities of time and place ² they invent sur-

¹ Chap. 36-51. Works, vol. ix, pp. 335-399. See also vol. x, p. 215 f.

² Aristotle advised dramatists to limit the time of the dramatic events to one astronomical day. The observance of this advice came to be called the "unity of time." With regard to the "unity of place" no specific counsel is given by Aristotle. Yet to him was attributed the rule that within one drama the scene should not be changed. The Greek practice recognized no such rule.

rogates: a species of neutral, conveniently ubiquitous locality and a stretchable, vaguely limited term of action.¹ With the Greeks the unity of time and, so far as it obtained, that of place, were due to the exigencies of their theatre, notably the fixed stage setting and the presence of the chorus.² Also they were helpful in fastening the attention to the plot. The unity of action³ was more essential than either of the others, because if the interest was scattered the Katharsis, or "purgation,"⁴ could not be insured. At this point Lessing illuminates that obscure passage in Aristotle, reverting to the arguments he had used with Mendelssohn twelve years before, strengthening and amplifying them and explaining why under modern conditions the close interlinking of fear for ourselves and pity for the tragic hero is best achieved if the latter's fate is the intelligible outgrowth of his character.⁵ For then we are made fully aware of the fateful possibilities that lie within ourselves, a consciousness which proves the most powerful lever of our latent capacity for fear and pity. Character, conse-

¹ Works, vol. x, pp. 370 f., 373 f., and 378.

² Works, vol. x, p. 378.

³ I. e., singleness of plot.

⁴ See p. xxix of this Introduction.

⁵ The fall of the tragic hero, therefore, may be traced to his *tragische Schuld* (tragic guilt).

quently, is the leaven of the drama. Not in strange happenings and astounding feats reposes the moving power of a plot, not by accident nor by divine decree may it be brought to a satisfying conclusion; rather must the course of events appear as the natural consequence of the interplay and clashes of the human wills involved in the action. A presentiment of the vitalness of character had led Lessing at first, and his teacher, Diderot, before him, to draw their figures with minute care for details. They sought to make their characters credible by giving them the most natural appearance. By this method Diderot,¹ certainly, only blurred the true picture with a mass of traits. To Lessing it was now clear that the value of portraiture lies deeper. To put it in terms of modern comparison, a character in a play should resemble a painting, not a photograph. The playwright need not waste his energies in copying the minutiae of the surface. If he would seize the essential features of a human character he must fathom its inward forces; only then can there result a picture of perpetual interest, proof against the fickleness of fashion and the changes of taste.

¹ *Le Fils Naturel* (The Natural Son), 1757, but not performed till 1771; *Le Père de Famille* (The Father of the Family, i. e., Head of the House), 1758, first performed in 1761.

The *Hamburg Dramaturgy* revolutionized not only the theory but also the practice of play-writing. Yet many writers now hold that as a code of dramatic art it is no longer valid. It should be readily granted that the last two or three decades have seen the birth of a number of very powerful dramas which both in their structure and characterization seem opposed to the views expressed by Aristotle, as rediscovered and set forth by Lessing with important additions of his own. It should be remembered, however, that we are hardly in a position yet to assign a final worth to works of such comparatively recent origin. A work may be very significant for its own time, without ever passing into the imperishable stock of World Literature. Time alone can tell. Still more important is a second consideration. The detractors of Lessing do not seem to take into account that the works of the modern masters referred to — Ibsen, Hauptmann, and others — owe very much more to the observance than to the disregard of Lessing's principles. After all, their power is co-extensive with their ability to produce that "Katharsis" of fear and pity. And, as for the character delineation, no sensible "naturalist" will want to deny that when he steeps the people of his play in their "*milieu*," i. e., tries to render

with the utmost accuracy both the persons and their outer environment, he does so from a belief that this method will conduce to a greater inner verisimilitude. He knows that if he fail in the last named respect his most laborious effort will have been misspent.

The *National Theatre* at Hamburg was wrecked on the shoals of the public indifference of which Lessing finds reason to complain as early as in the eighteenth chapter of the *Dramaturgy*.¹ In the face of such unconcern on the one side, and on the other a fanatical opposition to the enterprise, Lessing's zest could not but diminish with his declining hope. Towards the end, another cause tended likewise to deflect his interest. In the summer of 1768 he had rushed headlong into one of those engulfing controversies that formed the exciting episodes in his otherwise uneventful existence.

His present adversary, Professor Christian Adolf Klotz (1738-1771), of the University of Halle, was a man of formidable influence. Brilliant and versatile, though unstable and superficial, mundane and inordinately ambitious, this egregious "Streber"² had managed,

¹ Works, vol. ix, pp. 258, 259.

² The word corresponds more nearly to the French "arriviste" than to the English "tuft-hunter."

by unscrupulous flattery, finespun intrigue, and intimidation, to exercise sway over the greater part of the world of wit and learning. Klotz had done his best to win the good will of Lessing, among other ways by praising the *Laokoon* to the skies and flinging at its author's head the title of "divine genius." His demonstrations elicited no response. Soon Klotz changed to a threatening attitude. In a treatise, *Über den Nutzen und Gebrauch der alten geschnittenen Steine und ihrer Abdrücke* ¹ (1768), he belittled Lessing's work as an antiquarian. Lessing was not slow to retaliate, and the war between him and the Halle coterie was on. To it we owe Lessing's *Briefe antiquarischen Inhalts*,² usually called for brief *Antiquarische Briefe*. These masterpieces of polemical style display an astounding familiarity with antiquarian matters. But the writer does not content himself with beating the adversary unmercifully out of one position after another. In the interval between the two series of "Antiquarian Letters" the victim had foolishly indulged in personal invective, so Lessing later on turns from Klotz's

¹ On the Use and Employment of Cut Gems Among the Ancients, and of Their Impressions.

² Letters of Antiquarian Content. The first series appeared in 1768, the second in 1769.

puny book to his corrupt character, to the complete undoing of the venal and cowardly dandy. In all decent circles his victory was applauded as a step towards the much needed purification of literary life. The study of archæology, too, is indebted to the "Antiquarian Letters," for the information they contain. Still more does that science owe to an essay entitled *Wie die Alten den Tod gebildet* ¹ (1769), intended originally for a proposed continuation of the "Antiquarian Letters." The Greeks, Lessing shows, represented death as a genius with an inverted torch, a symbol quite in harmony with their general world-conception. It was Christianity that invented the picture of the skeleton with the scythe and hour-glass formerly used so often in churches and graveyards. Lessing's essay has rendered that hideous symbol almost obsolete. ²

After the National Theatre had perished Lessing was again without any assured means of support. The fantastic scheme of Klopstock to reorganize the whole intellectual life of Germany and to create a golden era of art and letters under the protectorate of Emperor Joseph II — a scheme in which a prominent part


¹ How the Ancients depicted Death.

² See Erich Schmidt, vol. ii, p. 165.

was allotted to Lessing — came to naught. In October, 1769, however, when Lessing's financial straits had reached something like a crisis, there came relief from an unexpected source. A devoted friend procured for Lessing the librarianship of the famous *Bibliotheca Guelferbytana* at Wolfenbüttel, which was owned by the sovereign Duke of Brunswick.

On the first of May, 1770, Lessing entered upon the duties of his new position. Before leaving Hamburg he had become engaged to marry, to the surprise of his friends, since they regarded him as a confirmed bachelor. There is no record of any other love affair in Lessing's life. His fiancée was Eva Katharina, the widow of his friend, Engelbert König. Lessing was very anxious for a hearth of his own, but it took seven years before Frau König could straighten out the business and estate of her first husband, and before her keen sense of responsibility to her children permitted her to marry again. The letters that passed between the two attest most truly their noble and unselfish natures.¹

¹ The correspondence of Lessing and Eva König was first published by Lessing's brother in 1789. In 1870 it was re-edited by Alfred Schöne (completed edition, 1885). The letters are made accessible also through the final volumes of the Lachmann-Muncker edition.



Lessing's prized domestic happiness lasted but little over a year, his wife dying in the early part of 1778. This loss brought Lessing to the verge of despair; in fact, he never knew happiness again. Altogether Wolfenbüttel had not proved the expected haven of rest. On the contrary, save for that one happy year, his life there was filled with trouble and bitterness. Nevertheless, this last decade in his history is as remarkable as any that preceded, for the greatness of its works. Some of these, indeed, are so closely bound up with his cruel experiences that they may truly be said to have been written with Lessing's heart's blood. Before turning to them, however, we shall have to give our attention briefly to *Emilia Galotti*, completed in 1772. As far back as 1757 Lessing planned a "Roman Republican tragedy" on the theme of the Roman maiden Virginia who was killed by her own father in order to be saved from dishonor. But already in 1758 ¹ he had made up his mind to modernize the plot; he was going to present a *bürgerliche* ² Virginia, to whom even then he gave the name Emilia Galotti. In realizing this early plan, during the winter of 1771-1772,

¹ See p. xxx, note 2, of this Introduction.

² Bourgeoise — an allusion to the middle-class drama. See pp. xxvi, xxvii of this Introduction.

Lessing strove to make his tragedy demonstrate and justify the theories expounded in the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*.¹ He transposed the plot to an Italian court at the time of Louis XIV. The Prince of Guastalla falls in love with Emilia Galotti, a young patrician lady, betrothed to Count Appiani. The prince's chamberlain, Marinelli, who is accustomed to be the secret abettor of his master's love adventures, succeeds by brute violence in separating Emilia from the Count, whom he fiercely hates. On his wedding day Appiani is killed by hired assassins and Emilia taken to the prince's country resort. There she is kept in isolation, under a flimsy pretext, although her parents are also at the castle. Meanwhile Countess Orsina, the prince's discarded favorite, has arrived on the scene, and, fired by her desire for vengeance, she reveals the infamous plot to Emilia's father, Colonel Odoardo Galotti. Odoardo enlightens his daughter, and, finding herself inextricably caught in the snare of the pursuer, Emilia persuades her father to stab her to death. The psychological motivation in Lessing's play contains a new element over the Roman tragedy in that the catastrophe is accounted for not solely

¹ A valuable discussion of *Emilia Galotti* is found in Erich Schmidt, *Lessing*, vol. ii, pp. 186 ff.

by the importunities of a powerful libertine, but, along with that, by a half-conscious temperamental response on the part of the heroine, which, she dimly foreknows, will bring about her ruin. The local and historical disguise of the court life in the play did not prevent its moral from being directly pointed at contemporaneous German conditions. *Emilia Galotti* is undoubtedly a protest against the reckless license practised in Lessing's own time at many of the smaller and larger courts, a protest all the bolder when the notorious habits of the heir apparent to the throne of Brunswick, the author's own employer, are remembered.

The final period of Lessing's life was embittered by a theological dispute carried to the length of persecution.

Shortly before Lessing's arrival in Hamburg there died in that city Professor Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694-1768), leaving behind the manuscript of a *Schutzschrift für die vernünftigen Verehrer Gottes*.¹ The very title labels the work as a manifesto of the *Aufklärung*,² and Reimarus had not erred in declaring his book as unfit for immediate publication because it would

¹ Apology for the Rational Worshipers of God.

² Enlightenment or Rationalism.

be certain to kindle an ardent religious strife. The son and daughter of Reimarus let Lessing read the manuscript, and he, although not sharing all of the writer's opinions, wanted to see it published because he sympathized strongly with the principle of free inquiry which Reimarus unequivocally asserted. At Wolfenbüttel Lessing issued a series of Bulletins, *Zur Geschichte und Literatur. Aus den Schätzen der Herzoglichen Bibliothek zu Wolfenbüttel*.¹ In the third number he published the first instalment of Reimarus' *Schutzschrift*, entitled *Über die Duldung der Deisten*,² as a "fragment of an unnamed author" (1774). The brochure, to his pleasant surprise, caused no commotion. The next year he took a trip to Italy, then followed his brief married life.

Emboldened, no doubt, by the impunity of the first venture, he launched a second instalment of Reimarus' "Apology" in 1777. As before, he made a running comment on the text in the accompanying *Gegensätze des Herausgebers*,³ and his notes showed plainly enough that editor and "Anonymus" could not be one and

¹ Historical and Literary Contributions from the stores of the Ducal Library at Wolfenbüttel.

² Concerning the Toleration of the Deists. Works, xii.

³ Rejoinders of the Editor. Works, vol. xii, pp. 428 ff.

the same person. In spite of this Lessing was suspected, nay, loudly denounced in orthodox circles, as the real author of the heretical documents. A storm of pious indignation broke over him, but the more furious it grew the higher did Lessing hold his head. Under the hands of the embattled enemies the piles of controversial literature rose rapidly. Lessing dealt with each of his opponents according to his tone and temper. The most formidable adversary was the Pastor Primarius of Hamburg, Johann Melchior Goeze (1717-1786). Against this fanatic was directed the bulk of Lessing's militant arguments. They bear the generic title *Anti-Goeze* (1778). Hotter and ever hotter waxed the fight, the interested public took sides, and finally the scandalized authorities thought it wise to suppress the quarrel by peremptorily prohibiting the principals from publishing another line on the topics of the debate. It is not feasible in this place to explain the nature of the controversy. Some of the "Axiomata"¹ stated by Lessing may, however, throw some little light on the position he maintained. The Bible, he declares, contains more than belongs to the Christian religion as such, and its non-

¹ Works, vol. xiii, pp. 107 ff. The headings of the *Axiomata* (axioms) are freely used for the following abstract.

essential parts are proper subjects of criticism. But even the essential parts of the Bible do not constitute the true source of Christianity. For a creed has to justify itself by an inner truth which cannot be imparted by any code or any amount of transmitted documents. The letter, says Lessing, is not the spirit, and the Bible is not religion. Consequently, criticism of the letter and the Bible is not necessarily criticism of religion or the spirit of religion. There was religion before there was a Bible. Christianity existed before the evangelists and apostles wrote. The Christian religion is not true because the evangelists and apostles taught it; but the evangelists and apostles taught it because it is true.

Throughout the controversy with Goeze Lessing was actuated not merely by cold scientific interest, but equally by his high sense of justice, which recoiled from the intolerance openly advocated by Goeze and his followers. On the subject of interreligious tolerance he would not be silenced by any governmental ukase without at least preaching a final sermon. So he mounted his "old pulpit," the stage, whence he issued, in the guise of a drama, the highest manifesto of modern humanitarianism. The plot of this blank verse play, *Nathan der Weise* ¹

¹ Nathan the Wise. Works, vol. iii.

(1779), which in its technic runs counter to some of Lessing's own theoretical demands, serves merely as the *mise-en-scène* of the great ethical lesson pronounced in the seventh scene of the third act. The lesson is there conveyed through the famous parable of the three rings. The story is a very old one and had been put to use by several writers before Lessing took hold of it. Its material may be found, in the raw, in the *Gesta Romanorum*,¹ the *Cento Novelle Antiche*,² and the *Decamerone*.³ But Lessing so transformed and vitalized the quaint tale that by its beauty and power the whole play is saved from mediocrity and endowed with imperishable worth in spite of its dramatic shortcomings. The central figure of the play is a rich Jew to whom the Sultan has put the embarrassing question which of the three positive religions is the truest and the most rational. Nathan evades the snare that lurks in the question by telling the following story. A ring, imbued with a secret power, has been handed down through several generations, always being given to the favorite son of the owner, and conferring upon each new possessor the headship and govern-

¹ The Deeds of the Romans; a medieval story book.

² One Hundred Ancient Stories; an Italian collection.

³ Decameron, Boccaccio's celebrated book of fiction.

ment of the house. In course of time it passed on to a man with three sons, all of whom were equally dutiful towards him, so that he could not but love them all alike. To which of the three should he leave the relic? In his perplexity he ordered two imitations to be made, which turned out so exact that he could not tell them himself from the original ring, and then gave to each of the three sons, in secret, one of the three rings, he knew not whether genuine or spurious, in token of his paternal love. Of course, no sooner was he dead than a dispute arose over the supremacy among the heirs, and the men that had shown themselves such excellent sons proved to be rather bad brothers. Finally they go to court. But the judge, seeing that each of the litigants is distrusted and hated by the others, whereas in the real talisman is said to abide a power to make its wearer "pleasing in the sight of God and men," pronounces all three rings counterfeits. He dismisses the case with this advice: Go hence, and let each strive to prove the genuineness of his ring by a course of life so righteous that the love and confidence of men will follow as a natural reward. And if such a course be pursued by generation after generation, then let the children's children's children appeal again for a

decision. Again the case will be dismissed — because, so we are left to infer, those rings that once were pronounced false are now become real, one and all. The magic power is in them — only it was not generated by the rings, it passed into them from the wearers.

Of course, the rings of the parable stand for Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. That the noblest figure in the drama is a Jew signifies no more a preference for the Mosaic religion than it does a slight to Christianity. Lessing's object was to show that contrary to general opinion the sublimest human character may appear amongst the children of a scorned and outcast people.

In *Nathan*, as well as in the controversial writings that went before, Lessing measures the value of religious doctrine by the conduct of its professors. He recognizes freely that there lies in every positive religious belief a saving grace. The ideal religion can only be that which eventually converts all its believers into useful, just, and charitable men. Is there such a religion?

Speculation upon this question led Lessing to write his inspiring essay *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts*¹ (1780). In this his last

¹ The Education of the Human Race; the first part was published in 1777, simultaneously with the Fragments.

work, his spiritual testament to posterity, he maintains the attitude of an evolutionist towards the history of civilization. From the beginning of time, he asserts, mankind has been schooled under the tutelage of Providence. The successive stages of its educational progress are evidenced by a change of text-books, so to speak: the bibles of mankind. Religions are not, however, created by an artificial process. Rather, each religion is revealed when its turn has arrived, that is to say when a people, by its evolution, is so far prepared for the revelation that it arrives by force of historic necessity. Revelation is for the human race what education is for the individual. The same method will not suffice for all individuals, nor for the same individual at all stages of his progress. Nor is it to be supposed, thinks Lessing, that Providence, the teacher of us all, has spoken the final word. Human progress has its goal, and is moving perceptibly nearer to it and ever nearer. Undeniably, at times, there is a backward trend. Yet that is only because "the straight line is not always the shortest." And surely there will come a time of perfection, the time of a new eternal gospel which is promised us in the elementary books of the new testament.

None of the works of the Wolfenbüttel period

gives the least sign of failing powers, although the abrupt ending of his domestic happiness and the incessant persecution to which he exposed himself by his theological controversies had thoroughly undermined Lessing's physical strength. While on a visit to Brunswick, where he had many friends, he fell violently ill and died, February 15, 1781. Even his death could not pacify his enemies, and the story they circulated about Lessing having been fetched by the devil in person, like Doctor Faustus of old, obtained ready credence in surprisingly large circles of the populace.

Nevertheless, a true appreciation of his greatness, recognized as fully by Goethe and Schiller as by less eminent representatives of eighteenth and nineteenth century classicism, gained ground much faster than might have been expected. Soon there was assigned to him a place among the triad of Germany's greatest writers; a place in which he has been confirmed and sustained by the judgment of posterity.

To the twentieth century still he remains a potent educational force. His works in the creative field may, perhaps, have lost their erstwhile immediacy of appeal. His theoretical opinions, whether dealing with literature, the fine arts, or theological questions, have at many

points been revised and improved, although in the main their value remains. But Friedrich Schlegel was entirely right in accounting for Lessing's greatness not by the perfection of any single performance, but by the singleness and "great tendency" and philosophical consistency of all his endeavors. Through these qualities Lessing was enabled to contribute a greater share than any of his contemporaries to the building up of the spiritual greatness of Germany at a period when politically she was in ruins. And for the higher activities of our own time, too, notably in the domain of scientific criticism, it was Lessing who laid the foundation. It is no wonder, then, that Germans show no disposition to forget their immeasurable debt to him who, in company with the great Prussian king, blazed the path towards their national independence.

OTTO HELLER.

Washington University,
St. Louis.

MINNA VON BARNHELM

CHARACTERS

MAJOR VON TELLHEIM, *retired.*

MINNA VON BARNHELM.

COUNT VON BRUCHSALL, *her uncle.*

JUST, *the Major's man-servant.*

PAUL WERNER, *one time sergeant-major under Major
von Tellheim.*

THE INNKEEPER.

A LADY IN MOURNING.

A ROYAL COURIER.

RICCAUT DE LA MARLINIERE.

*The scene alternates between the parlor of an inn and
an adjoining private room.*

MINNA VON BARNHELM

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

JUST

JUST. [*sitting in a corner, dozing, and talking in his sleep*]. You scoundrel of a landlord! You would, would you, and to *us*? — Go ahead, brother! Lay on, brother! — [*He hits out and is awakened by the movement.*] Hello! at it again? I cannot close my eyes but I get into a fight with him. If only he had but half of all these beatings! — But see, it is day! Why, I must look up my poor master without delay. He shall not set foot in this accursed house again if I can help it. I wonder where he has passed the night.

SCENE TWO

LANDLORD. JUST

LANDLORD. Good morning, Master Just, good morning! What, up so early? Or should I say: up so late?

JUST. Say what you like.

LANDLORD. I am saying nothing but "good morning"; and surely that deserves a "many thanks" from Master Just!

JUST. Many thanks!

LANDLORD. A person is cross when he cannot get his proper rest. I'll wager the Major has not come home, and you have been watching for him here?

JUST. What a wonderful man at guessing!

LANDLORD. Oh, I am merely surmising, merely surmising.

JUST. [*turning, and about to go*]. Your servant!

LANDLORD. [*stopping him*]. Oh, by no means, Master Just!

JUST. Very well then: not your servant!

LANDLORD. Ah, Master Just, surely you will not let me think that you are holding your anger over from yesterday? Who would keep his wrath over night?

JUST. I would; and over all the nights to come.

LANDLORD. Is that Christianlike?

JUST. Just as Christianlike as to turn an honest man out of the house, to throw him into the street when he cannot pay instantly.

LANDLORD. For shame! who could be so wicked?

JUST. A Christian innkeeper. Throw out my master! a man like that! an officer like that!

LANDLORD. You mean to say I have turned him out of my house? thrown him into the street? I have far too much respect for an officer and far too much pity for one who has been retired to do such a thing! Circumstances forced me to assign him another room. Think no more about it, Master Just. [*He calls into the wings.*] Hello! I will make up for it in another way. [*Enter a boy.*] Bring something to drink; Master Just wishes to have a drop; and something good!

JUST. Don't trouble yourself, landlord. May the drop turn to poison that — but I will not swear; I have not had my breakfast!

LANDLORD. [*to boy who brings a flask of cordial and a glass.*] Give it here. You may go! — Now, Master Just; something extra fine: strong, delicious, wholesome. [*Fills the glass and hands it to him.*] That can put a stomach to rights again when it's put about by want of sleep!

JUST. I almost feel I oughtn't! — Yet why should I let my health suffer for his rudeness? — [*He takes it and drinks.*]

LANDLORD. Your health, Master Just!

JUST. [*as he returns the glass.*] Not bad! But, landlord, you are a boor just the same!

LANDLORD. Don't say that, don't say that! — Quick, have another; it is not well to stand on one leg.

JUST. [*after drinking*]. Good, I must say! very good! Home made, landlord?

LANDLORD. The Lord forbid! genuine Dantzig! genuine, double distilled "salmon label."

JUST. Look you, landlord, if I could act the hypocrite, I would act it for the sake of stuff like this; but I *cannot*; it must out: you are a boor, landlord, all the same!

LANDLORD. Never in all my life has anybody said that to me. One more, Master Just; all good things go by threes!

JUST. I don't care if I do! [*He drinks.*] A good thing, really a good thing! But the truth is a good thing too. Landlord, you are none the less a boor!

LANDLORD. If I were, do you think I should stand by like this and listen?

JUST. Oh, yes, for a boor seldom has spunk.

LANDLORD. Just one more, Master Just? A four-ply cord is all the more durable.

JUST. No, too much is too much! And what good will it do you, landlord? I would stick to my text to the last drop in the flask. Fie, landlord! to have such good Dantzig and such bad manners! — To think that you would take

possession of a man's room in his absence — when he's a man like my master, who has lived with you this year and a day, from whom you have got so many a fine thaler, who has never left a farthing unpaid in his life, — just because he has not paid promptly for a month or two, and because he no longer spends so freely!

LANDLORD. But what if I just had to have the room? What if I foresaw that the Major would have given possession of his own free will, if only we could have waited long enough for his return? Was I to let a stranger of such distinction drive away from my door? Was I wilfully to chase such big game into the clutches of another innkeeper? Besides, I do not even believe that she could have found accommodation elsewhere. The inns now are all crowded. Was such a young and beautiful and charming lady to remain in the street? Your master is far too chivalrous for that! And what does he lose as it is? Did I not assign him another room instead?

JUST. Back by the pigeon-house; the view between the neighbor's chimneys —

LANDLORD. The view was very nice indeed before the confounded neighbor obstructed it. Otherwise isn't the room elegant, and isn't it papered?

JUST. It *has* been!

LANDLORD. Not at all, one wall is papered still. And your little room adjoining, Master Just: what is the matter with the little room? It has a fireplace, which smokes a little in winter, to be sure —

JUST. But which in summer makes rather a good appearance! Sir, I verily believe you are mocking us into the bargain.

LANDLORD. Come, come, Master Just, Master Just —

JUST. Don't you make Master Just warm under the collar, or —

LANDLORD. I make you warm? it's the Dantzic is doing it! —

JUST. An officer like my master! Or do you think that a retired officer is any the less an officer who can't break your neck? Why were you all so deferential during the war, Messieurs Innkeepers? Why was every officer a worthy man then, and every soldier a good, honest fellow? Has this wee bit of peace made you so cocky already?

LANDLORD. Now, why should you excite yourself so, Master Just? —

JUST. I want to excite myself. —

SCENE THREE

V. TELLHEIM. LANDLORD. JUST

TELLHEIM. *[entering]*. Just!

JUST. *[thinking that the landlord is addressing him]*. Just! — Are we so intimate? —

TELLHEIM. Just!

JUST. I should think it's Master Just I am to you!

LANDLORD. *[perceiving the Major]*. St! st! Master, Master, Master Just, — please look round; your master —

TELLHEIM. Just, I believe you are quarrelling? What were my orders?

LANDLORD. Oh, your Honor! Quarrelling? God forbid! Should your most humble servant presume to quarrel with one who enjoys the honor of being in your service?

JUST. If only I dared land one on his cringing back! —

LANDLORD. It is true, Master Just speaks up for his master, and a little hotly. But he is right to do so; I esteem him all the more; I love him for it. —

JUST. Why can't I knock his teeth down his throat!

LANDLORD. Only it is a pity that he is in a passion over nothing. For I feel as sure as can

be that I have not fallen into disgrace with your Honor because — necessity — made it necessary for me —

TELLHEIM. Enough, more than enough, sir! I am in your debt; you take possession of my room during my absence; you must be paid; I must seek lodgings elsewhere. Very natural! —

LANDLORD. Elsewhere? You are going to move, your Honor? Wretched man, ruined man that I am! No, never! Rather than that, the lady shall give up the lodgings. The Major can't and won't give up his room to her; the room is his; she must go; I cannot help her. — I am going, sir —

TELLHEIM. Friend, do not make two foolish moves instead of one! The lady must remain in possession of the room. —

LANDLORD. And your Honor could believe that out of mistrust, out of anxiety for my money, —? As if I did not know that your Honor could pay me whenever you pleased. — The sealed purse — five hundred dollars in louis d'or, — it's marked, — which your Honor has been keeping in the desk, — is in good hands. —

TELLHEIM. I should hope so; as well as my other belongings. — Just shall take charge of them, when he has paid your bill. —

LANDLORD. In truth, I was quite alarmed when I found the purse. — I have always considered your Honor a methodical and cautious man, who never spends all that he has. — Nevertheless — if I had imagined that there was cash in the desk —

TELLHEIM. You would have treated me more civilly. I understand you. — But you may go, sir; leave me; I have something to say to my servant. —

LANDLORD. But, your Honor —

TELLHEIM. Come, Just, the gentleman will not permit me to give you your orders in his house. —

LANDLORD. Oh, please, sir, I am going this instant! — My whole house is at your service.

SCENE FOUR

v. TELLHEIM. JUST

JUST. [*stamping his foot and spitting after the LANDLORD*]. Fie!

TELLHEIM. What's the matter?

JUST. I am bursting from rage.

TELLHEIM. About as bad as bursting from being too full.¹

JUST. And as for you, — I do not recognize

¹ Probably alluding to the color of Just's face, heightened by his early convivialty.

you any more, sir. May I die before your eyes if you are not the guardian angel of this spiteful, heartless rascal! At risk of gallows and axe and rack I could — I could have throttled him with these hands and torn him to pieces with these teeth. —

TELLHEIM. Beast!

JUST. Better a beast than such a man!

TELLHEIM. But what is it you want?

JUST. I want you to realize how deeply you have been insulted.

TELLHEIM. And then?

JUST. To avenge yourself. — But no, the fellow is beneath your notice. —

TELLHEIM. Oh, what you want is permission to avenge me yourself? That was my idea from the first. He was not to lay eyes on me again, and it was from your hands that he was to have got his money. I know that you can throw down a handful of money with a pretty contemptuous air. —

JUST. Indeed? A capital revenge! —

TELLHEIM. But one which we must still postpone. I have not one farthing in cash left! Nor do I know how to raise any.

JUST. No cash? Then how about that purse with five hundred dollars in louis d'or which the landlord found in your desk?

TELLHEIM. That is money which was given to me to take care of.

JUST. Surely not the hundred pistoles which your old sergeant brought you four or five weeks ago?

TELLHEIM. The same, Paul Werner's. Why not?

JUST. And you have not used these yet? Why, sir, you can do with them what you like. I'll answer for it —

TELLHEIM. Indeed?

JUST. Werner heard from me how you are being put off with your claims against the War Office. He heard —

TELLHEIM. That I certainly should become a beggar if I were not one already. — I am very much obliged to you, Just. — And so it was this information that moved Werner to share his poor little all with me. — Anyway I am glad that I have guessed it. — Listen, Just, while we are on the subject — make out your account, too; we must part. —

JUST. How? what?

TELLHEIM. Not another word; someone is coming. —

SCENE FIVE

A LADY IN MOURNING. v. TELLHEIM. JUST

LADY. I beg your pardon, sir! —

TELLHEIM. Whom are you seeking, Madam?

LADY. None other than the worthy gentleman to whom I have the honor of speaking. You do not recognize me? I am the widow of your former staff captain —

TELLHEIM. Good Heavens, Madam, what a change! —

LADY. I come directly from the sickbed to which grief for the loss of my husband had brought me. I must trouble you at an early hour, Major. I am leaving for the country, where a friend, kind-hearted, but like myself not in fortune's favor, offers me a refuge for the present.

TELLHEIM. [*to JUST*]. Go, leave us alone. —

SCENE SIX

LADY. v. TELLHEIM

TELLHEIM. Speak freely, Madam! Before me you need not feel ashamed of your misfortune. Can I serve you in any way?

LADY. Major von Tellheim —

TELLHEIM. I am deeply sorry for you, Madam. How can I serve you? You know

your husband was my friend; my friend, mark you; I have always been chary of this title.

LADY. Who knows better than I how worthy you were of his friendship, how worthy he was of yours! You would have been his last thought, your name the last sound on his dying lips, had not the dictates of nature claimed that sad privilege for his unfortunate son, for his unhappy wife —

TELLHEIM. Cease, Madam! I would fain weep with you, but I have no tears to-day. Spare me! You come upon me at a time when I could easily be tempted to murmur against Providence. — Oh, my honest Marloff! — Quick, Madam, what would you have me do? If I am in a position to serve you, if I am —

LADY. I must not depart without fulfilling his last behest. He remembered, shortly before the end, that he was dying in debt to you, and adjured me to discharge this debt with the first money that came to my hand. I have sold his equipment and come to redeem his note. —

TELLHEIM. What, Madam? Is this the reason for your coming?

LADY. It is. Permit me to count out the money.

TELLHEIM. By no means, Madam! Marloff in my debt? That can hardly be. Let's look.

[*He draws out his pocket-book and searches.*] I find no record of it.

LADY. You have probably mislaid his note, and the note does not matter. — Permit me —

TELLHEIM. No, Madam! I am not in the habit of misplacing such things. If I do not have it, it is a proof either that I never had such a thing, or that it has been redeemed and returned already.

LADY. O, Major! —

TELLHEIM. It is as I say, Madam. Marloff owed me nothing when he died. Nor can I even remember that he ever did owe me anything. That is the fact, Madam; rather has he left me his debtor. I have never been able to square myself with a man who for six years shared with me good fortune and ill, honor and danger. I shall not forget that he has left a son. He shall be my son as soon as I can be a father to him. The state of confusion in which I now find my own affairs —

✓ LADY. Generous man! But give me, too, credit for some sense of honor. Take the money, Major; then I shall at least feel easier. —

TELLHEIM. What more do you need for your ease of mind than my assurance that this money does not belong to me? Or do you want me to rob the helpless child of my friend? Robbery,

Madam, is what it would be, in the strictest sense of the word. It belongs to him; invest it for him. —

LADY. I understand you; only pardon me if I have not quite learned as yet to receive benefactions. But, tell me, how do you come to know that a mother will do more for her son than she would for her own life? I am going —

TELLHEIM. Good-bye, Madam, good-bye. Godspeed to you! I will not ask you to send me news of yourself. It might come at a time when I could make no use of it. But one thing more, Madam; I had almost forgotten the most important point. Marloff still has a claim on the treasury of our former regiment. His claims are as just as mine. If mine are paid, his must be paid also. I will vouch for it. —

LADY. Oh! sir — But I would rather not speak. To plan future deeds of kindness in this way is, in the eyes of Heaven, to have performed them already. Receive its reward, and the tribute of my tears! [*Exit.*]

SCENE SEVEN

TELLHEIM

TELLHEIM. Poor, good woman! I must not forget to destroy the wretched thing. [*He takes*

from his pocketbook papers which he tears up.]
Who would guarantee that my own need might not tempt me some day to make use of it?

SCENE EIGHT

JUST. TELLHEIM

TELLHEIM. Are you back?

JUST. *[wiping his eyes].* Yes!

TELLHEIM. You have been weeping?

JUST. I have been writing out my bill in the kitchen and the kitchen was full of smoke. Here it is, sir!

TELLHEIM. Give it to me!

JUST. Have pity upon me, sir. I know very well that people have no pity on you; but —

TELLHEIM. What do you want?

JUST. I should have expected to die sooner than to be dismissed.

TELLHEIM. I have no further use for you; I must learn to manage without a servant. *[Opens account and reads.]* "What the Major owes me: Wages for three months and a half, at 6 thalers a month, makes 21 thalers. Expended in sundries since the first of this month, 1 thaler, 7 groats, 9 pence. Grand total, 22 thalers, 7 groats, 9 pence." — Good, and it is only fair that I pay you for the whole current month.

JUST. The other page, Major —

TELLHEIM. Still more? [*Reads.*] "What I owe the Major: Paid for me to the field surgeon, 25 thalers. Paid for me for attendance and care during my convalescence, 39 thalers. Advanced at my request to my father, burnt out of his house and stript of his property, 50 thalers, not counting in the present of those two horses taken as booty. Grand total, 114 thalers. Deducting the above 22 thalers, 7 groats, 9 pence, balance due the Major 91 thalers, 16 groats, 3 pence." — Fellow, you are mad! —

JUST. I know very well that I cost you far more. But it would be wasting ink to put it all down with the rest. I cannot pay even this much; and if you go to the extreme of taking away my livery, which, for that matter, I have not earned yet either, — then I had rather you had let me snuff out in the hospital.

TELLHEIM. What sort of man do you think I am? You owe me nothing, and I will recommend you to one of my acquaintances, with whom you shall have a better place than with me.

JUST. I owe you nothing, and yet you cast me off?

TELLHEIM. Because I do not wish to fall into your debt.

JUST. For that reason? for that reason alone? — Then as surely as I am in your debt and as surely as you can never be in mine, so surely you shall not cast me off now. — Do what you like, Major, I remain with you; I must remain with you. —

TELLHEIM. And what of your obstinacy, your ugly temper, your savage, violent bearing towards everybody who you think has no authority over you, your spite and malice, your vindictiveness —

JUST. Paint me as black as you like; for all that I will think no worse of myself than of my dog. Last winter I was going along the canal in the dusk, when I heard a sound like somebody whimpering. I climbed down and groped in the direction of the sound, and thought I was saving a child, and drew a poodle out of the water. Never mind, thought I. The poodle followed me; but I am no lover of poodles. I chased him away, in vain; I beat him from me, in vain. I did not allow him in my room at night; he stayed out on the doorstep. Whenever he came too near me, I kicked him; he yelped, looked up at me, and wagged his tail. So far he has not received so much as a bit of bread from my hand, and yet I am the only one whom he obeys and who dare touch him. He bounds

along in front of me and shows off his tricks to me unbidden. He is an ugly poodle, but ever so good a dog. If he goes on like this much longer I shall finally cease to dislike poodles.

TELLHEIM. [*aside*]. And I him! No, there are no complete monsters! — Just, we remain together.

JUST. Of course we shall! — As if you could get along without a servant! You forget your wounds, and that you have the use of only one arm. Why, you cannot even dress alone. I am indispensable to you, and I am — without boasting, Major — and I am a servant who — if the worst comes to the worst — can beg and steal for his master.

TELLHEIM. Just, we shall not remain together.

JUST. That's all right!

SCENE NINE

A SERVANT. V. TELLHEIM. JUST

SERVANT. Hist! Comrade!

JUST. What's the matter?

SERVANT. Can't you direct me to the officer who was living in this room as late as yesterday? [*Pointing to a room in the direction from which he is advancing.*]

JUST. Perhaps I could do that easily enough. What do you bring him?

SERVANT. What we always bring when we bring nothing: compliments. My mistress heard that he was dislodged on her account. My mistress knows what's proper, and I am to ask his pardon.

JUST. Well then, ask his pardon; there he stands.

SERVANT. What is he? By what title does one address him?

TELLHEIM. My man, I have already heard your message. It is a superfluous courtesy on the part of your mistress, and I duly acknowledge it. Give her my respects. — What is the name of your mistress? —

SERVANT. What is her name? She is called "my lady."


TELLHEIM. And her family name?

SERVANT. That I have not yet heard, and to ask it is not my business. I manage so that I usually have a new employer every six weeks. The deuce remember all their names! —

JUST. Bravo, comrade!

SERVANT. I came to this one only a few days ago in Dresden. I believe she is seeking her fiancé here. —

TELLHEIM. Enough, my man. It was the



name of your mistress I wished to know, but not her secrets. You may go!

SERVANT. Comrade, he wouldn't do for *my* master!

SCENE TEN

V. TELLHEIM. JUST

TELLHEIM. Quick, Just, quick, get us out of this house! I feel the politeness of the strange lady more keenly than I feel the rudeness of the landlord. Here, take this ring, the only thing of value that I have left; I never expected to make such a use of it! — Pawn it! borrow eighty Friedrichsd'or on it; the landlord's bill can hardly amount to thirty. Pay him and move out my things — ah, yes, but where? — wherever you like. The cheaper the inn the better. You will meet me at the coffee-house next door. I am going; do your work well. —

JUST. Have no fear, Major! —

TELLHEIM. [*coming back again*]. Above all things: my pistols which are hanging behind the bed — don't let them be forgotten.

JUST. I will forget nothing.

TELLHEIM. [*coming back once more*]. One thing more: take your poodle, too; do you hear, Just?

SCENE ELEVEN

JUST

JUST. The poodle will not be left behind. Trust the poodle to look after that. — Hm! So master still had this valuable ring left too? And he carried it in his pocket instead of wearing it on his finger, did he? — My good landlord, we are not yet so hard up as we seem. My pretty little ring, I will pawn you to him, to no other person! — I know he will be furious that you are not to be wholly consumed in his house! — Ah —

SCENE TWELVE

PAUL WERNER. JUST

JUST. Well met, Werner! good day, Werner! welcome to the city!

WERNER. Confound that village! I can never become used to it again. Cheer up, boys, cheer up! I am bringing a fresh supply of money! Where is the Major?

JUST. You must have met him; he just went down stairs.

WERNER. I came up the back stairs. Well, how is he getting on? I should have been with you last week, but —

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE

MINNA VON BARNHELM. FRANCISCA

[The scene is laid in the lady's room]

MINNA. *[in morning dress, looking at her watch]* But really, Francisca, we are up very early. Time will hang heavy on our hands.

FRANCISCA. Who can sleep in these abominable big cities? The carriages, the watchmen, the cats, the drums, and the corporals — they never cease to rattle, to shout, to roll, to caterwaul, and to curse; just as if rest were the very last thing that night was made for. — A cup of tea, my lady? —

MINNA. I do not like the tea. —

FRANCISCA. I will have some of our chocolate made.

MINNA. For yourself, if you like.

FRANCISCA. For myself? I would as soon chat by myself as drink by myself. — You are right, time will hang heavy on our hands. — For sheer *ennui* we shall have to dress up, and try on the frock in which we mean to make the first assault.

MINNA. Why do you talk of assaults when I come only to demand observance of surrender?

FRANCISCA. And the officer whom we have driven out, and to whom we sent apologies on that account — he certainly cannot be the best bred man in the world; otherwise, I am sure he could have requested the honor of being allowed to wait upon us. —


MINNA. All officers are not Tellheims. To tell the truth, I sent this one my apologies only so as to have an opportunity of asking him about the other. — Francisca, my heart tells me that my journey will be successful, that I shall find him. —

FRANCISCA. Your heart, my lady? Under no circumstances should too much trust be put in the heart. The heart is mighty fond of echoing the mouth. If the mouth were equally inclined to echo the heart, it had long been the fashion to wear our mouths under lock and key.

MINNA. Ha! ha! the idea! our mouths under lock and key! The fashion would suit me to perfection!

FRANCISCA. Rather keep the prettiest teeth out of sight than let the heart overleap them every moment!

MINNA. What? are you so reserved? —



FRANCISCA. No, my lady; rather I should like to be more so. People seldom speak of a virtue they have, but all the more of one they lack.

MINNA. Why, Francisca, you have made a very good observation there. —

FRANCISCA. Made? Do you make what just happens to come to your mind?

MINNA. And do you know the real reason why I find this observation so good? It applies with much force to my Tellheim.

FRANCISCA. Indeed, and what would not apply to him, to your way of thinking?

MINNA. Friend and foe say that he is the bravest man in the world. But who ever heard him talk of bravery? He has the most upright of hearts, but uprightness and nobility are words that are never upon his tongue.

FRANCISCA. What virtues *does* he talk about?

MINNA. He talks of none, for he lacks none.

FRANCISCA. Just what I was waiting to hear.

MINNA. Wait, Francisca; I recollect. He often talks of economy. In confidence, Francisca, I believe the man is a spendthrift.

FRANCISCA. Another thing, my lady. I have also heard him speak very often of loyalty

and constancy towards you. What if the gentleman were also fickle?

MINNA. You wretch! — But are you in earnest, Francisca?

FRANCISCA. How long is it now since he has written to you?

MINNA. Ah! he has written to me only once since the peace.

FRANCISCA. Well, I declare! another complaint against peace! It is strange. Peace should only make good the evil that war has caused, and yet it also destroys what good its opposite may perchance have brought about. Peace should not be so capricious! — And how long have we had peace now? Time drags terribly when news is so scarce. — The mails are regular again to no purpose; no one writes; for no one has anything to write about.

MINNA. We have peace, he wrote me, and I am approaching the fulfilment of my desires. But to write me this only once, one single time —

FRANCISCA. Yes, and to force us to speed toward the fulfilment of these desires — just let us find him, he shall pay for that! But suppose the man should, after all, have fulfilled desires all the same, and we were to learn here —

MINNA. [*anxiously and eagerly*]. That he was dead?

FRANCISCA. To you, my lady: in the arms of another. —

MINNA. You tease, you! Wait, Francisca, he shall pay you up for that! — But chatter away; or we shall fall asleep again. — His regiment was disbanded when peace was made. Who knows into what tangle of accountings and auditings he may have been thrown by reason of that? Who knows into what other regiment, to what distant province he has been transferred? Who knows what circumstances — Some one is knocking.

FRANCISCA. Come in!

SCENE TWO

LANDLORD. MINNA. FRANCISCA

LANDLORD. [*putting his head in*]. Is it permitted, your ladyship? —

FRANCISCA. Our landlord? — Why, come right in.

LANDLORD. [*a quill behind his ear, a sheet of paper and an ink-stand in his hand*]. I have come, your ladyship, to wish you a most humble good morning, — [*to FRANCISCA*] and the same to you, my pretty maid, —

FRANCISCA. A polite man!

MINNA. We thank you.

FRANCISCA. And wish you good morning too.

LANDLORD. May I presume to ask how your ladyship has rested the first night under my poor roof? —

FRANCISCA. The roof is not so poor, landlord; but the beds might have been better.

LANDLORD. What is this I hear? You did not rest well? Perhaps the extreme fatigue from the journey —

MINNA. It is possible.

LANDLORD. Surely, surely! for otherwise — However, if your ladyship has not been comfortable in every respect, will your ladyship only deign to command.

FRANCISCA. Very well, landlord, very well! We are not at all bashful, and an inn is the last place in which to be so. You may trust us to tell you how we should like things.

LANDLORD. In the next place, I have also come to — [*taking the quill from behind his ear*].

FRANCISCA. Well? —

LANDLORD. Doubtless your ladyship is already familiar with the wise ordinances of our police.

MINNA. Not in the least, landlord. —

LANDLORD. We landlords are instructed not to lodge any stranger, of whatever rank and

sex, for twenty-hour hours without submitting in writing to the proper authorities his name, domicile, occupation, his business here, the probable length of his sojourn, and so on.

MINNA. Very well.

LANDLORD. Your ladyship, then, will be pleased to — [*Going to a table and making ready to write.*]

MINNA. Quite willingly. — My name is —

LANDLORD. Just a moment, if you please! — [*Writing.*] “Dated, the twenty-second of August, A. D., etc.; arrived in this city at the King of Spain’s Arms — now your ladyship’s name?”

MINNA. The Lady of Barnhelm.

LANDLORD. [*writing*]. “Of Barnhelm” — Coming — where from, your ladyship?

MINNA. From my estates in Saxony.

LANDLORD. [*writing.*] “estates in Saxony” — in Saxony! Indeed! In Saxony, your ladyship? in Saxony?

FRANCISCA. Well, why not? Surely it is no sin in this country to come from Saxony?

LANDLORD. A sin? The Lord forbid! that would be a brand-new sin indeed! — From Saxony, then? Ay, ay, from Saxony! Dear Saxony! — But if I am not mistaken, your ladyship, Saxony is not small, and has several — what shall I call them? — districts,

provinces. — Our police are very particular, your ladyship. —

MINNA. I understand: well then, from my estates in Thuringia.


LANDLORD. In Thuringia! Yes, that is better, your ladyship, that is more definite. — [*Writing and reading.*] “The Lady of Barnhelm, coming from her estates in Thuringia, with a waiting-woman and two footmen” —

FRANCISCA. Waiting-woman? I suppose that is meant for me?

LANDLORD. Yes, my dear. —

FRANCISCA. Well, then, landlord, put down maid instead of woman. — I hear the police are very exact: there might be a misunderstanding which might make trouble for me some day when my banns are published. My name is Francisca, surname Willig, Francisca Willig. I am also from Thuringia. My father was miller on one of her ladyship’s estates. It is called Little Ramsdorf. My brother has the mill now. I was taken to the Manor when very young, and was brought up with her ladyship. We are of the same age, twenty-one next Lammastide. I have learned everything that her ladyship learned. I shall be glad to have the police know all about me.

LANDLORD. Good, my pretty maid, I’ll



make a note of that for future reference. —
But now, your ladyship, your business here? —

MINNA. My business?

LANDLORD. Does your ladyship seek a favor
from his Majesty the King?

MINNA. Oh, no!

LANDLORD. Or from our high Courts of Justice?

MINNA. No, indeed.

LANDLORD. Or —

MINNA. No, no. I am here solely on my own
personal business.

LANDLORD. Quite right, your ladyship; but
what is the nature of this personal business?

MINNA. It is — Francisca, I do believe we
are being put through an examination.

FRANCISCA. Mr. Landlord, surely the police
do not demand to know a woman's secrets?

LANDLORD. Certainly, my dear, the police
insist upon knowing everything, everything,
and especially secrets.

FRANCISCA. Ah, then, my lady, what is to be
done? — Well then, listen, Mr. Landlord; —
but be sure and let it remain a secret between
us and the police! —

MINNA. I wonder what the little fool will
tell him?

FRANCISCA. We have come to carry off one of the King's officers —

LANDLORD. How? What? My dear! my dear!

FRANCISCA. Or to let ourselves be carried off by the officer. It is all the same.

MINNA. Francisca, are you crazy? — Landlord, the saucy thing is making fun of you.

LANDLORD. I hope not! With your humble servant, indeed, she can joke as much as she likes; only with the all-powerful police —

MINNA. I tell you what, landlord. — I do not know how to act in this matter. I should think you might let all this red tape go until the arrival of my uncle. I told you yesterday, you remember, why he did not arrive at the same time as I did. His carriage broke down ten miles from here, and he would on no account permit me to lose a night because of the accident. So I was obliged to proceed. He will arrive not later than twenty-four hours after me, if it is that.

LANDLORD. Very well, your ladyship, then we will wait for him.

MINNA. He will be better able to answer your questions. He will know to whom and to what extent he must give an account of himself; how much he must reveal of his business, and how much he may keep to himself.

LANDLORD. So much the better! Of course, of course, one cannot expect a young maid [*looking at FRANCISCA significantly*] to treat a serious matter with serious people in a serious way —

MINNA. And his rooms are ready for him, I hope, landlord?

LANDLORD. Quite, your ladyship, quite, all but the one —

FRANCISCA. Out of which you must first turn another honest man perhaps, as you did —

LANDLORD. Ladies' maids from Saxony are very compassionate, I suppose, your ladyship?

MINNA. Never mind, landlord; you did not act well in the matter. It would have been better if you had not accommodated us.

LANDLORD. What's that, your ladyship, what's that?

MINNA. I understand that the officer who was dislodged on our account —

LANDLORD. Is indeed only a retired officer, your ladyship —

MINNA. Even so! —

LANDLORD. Who is nearly done for. —

MINNA. So much the worse! He is said to be a very deserving man.

LANDLORD. Am I not telling you that he has been retired?

MINNA. The King cannot know all deserving men.

LANDLORD. O certainly, he knows them, knows them all. —

MINNA. Then he cannot reward them all.

LANDLORD. They would all have been rewarded if they had lived accordingly. But as it is, these gentlemen lived during the war as if war would last forever, as if all laws of property were suspended forever. Now all inns and hotels are full of them, and a landlord does well to be on his guard against them. By chance I have come off pretty well with this one. Even if he had no more money, at least he still had valuables, and I might safely have let him stay on for two or three months. Still, better err on the safe side. — Apropos, your ladyship, you are a judge of jewels, I suppose? —

MINNA. Not especially so.

LANDLORD. How could that be possible, your ladyship? — I must show you a ring, a precious ring. Though now that I notice it, your ladyship has a very beautiful one on your finger, and the more I look at it the more I must marvel that it is so like mine. — Oh, look, just look! [*Taking it out of the case and handing it to the lady.*] What fire! the middle brilliant alone weighs over five carats.

MINNA. [*looking at it*]. Where am I? What is this I see? This ring —

LANDLORD. Is worth its fifteen hundred dollars at the lowest estimate.

MINNA. Francisca! — do look! —

LANDLORD. Nor did I hesitate a moment to loan eighty pistoles on it.

MINNA. Do you not recognize it, Francisca?

FRANCISCA. The very same! — Landlord, where did you get this ring? —

LANDLORD. Come, my dear! You surely have no claim to it?

FRANCISCA. We have no claim to this ring? — Inside in the setting must be her ladyship's monogram. — Just show him, my lady.

MINNA. It is he, it is he! — How do you come by this ring, landlord?

LANDLORD. I? In the most honest way in the world. — Your ladyship, your ladyship, surely you would not get me into trouble and misfortune? How do I know where the ring really belongs? During the war many a thing has changed owners, very often, with or without the foreknowledge of the owner. And war is war. Probably more rings from Saxony than this have crossed the border. — Give it back to me, your ladyship, give it back to me!

FRANCISCA. Answer first: from whom did you get it?

LANDLORD. From a man whom I cannot think capable of such a thing; from a man otherwise good.—

MINNA. From the best man under the sun, if you have it from its owner. — Quick, bring the man to me! It is he in person, or at least some one who knows him.

LANDLORD. Who? and whom, your ladyship?

FRANCISCA. Don't you understand? Our Major.

LANDLORD. Major? Correct, he who occupied this room before you and from whom I have the ring is a major.

MINNA. Major von Tellheim?

LANDLORD. Von Tellheim, yes! Do you know him?

MINNA. Do I know him? He is here? Tellheim is here? He, *he* has lived in this room? He, did *he* pawn this ring with you? How did the man get into this embarrassment? Where is he? He is in debt to you? — Francisca, the money box! Open it! [*While FRANCISCA sets it on the table and opens it.*] How much does he owe you? To whom else is he in debt? Bring me all his creditors. Here is money. Here are drafts. It is all his!

LANDLORD. What's all this?

MINNA. Where is he? where is he?

LANDLORD. He was here only an hour ago.

MINNA. Hateful man, how could you be so rude, so hard, so cruel to him?

LANDLORD. Your ladyship's pardon —

MINNA. Quick, bring him hither.

LANDLORD. Perhaps his servant is still here. Does your ladyship wish this man to look him up?

MINNA. Do I? Hurry, run; for this service alone I will forget how badly you have treated him. —

FRANCISCA. Quick, Mr. Landlord, hurry, go, go! [*Pushes him out*].

SCENE THREE

MINNA. FRANCISCA

MINNA. Now I have him again, Francisca! You see, now I have him again! I know not where I am for very joy. Come, rejoice with me, dear Francisca! But, in truth, why should you? Yet you shall, you must rejoice with me. Come, dear, I will make you a present, so you can rejoice with me. Speak, Francisca, what shall I give you? Which of my things becomes you? What would you like to have? Take

what you will; only do rejoice. Ah, I see you will take nothing. Wait! [*thrusting her hand into the cash-box*] There, dear Francisca [*and giving her money*], buy yourself whatever you would like. Ask for more, if it be not enough. Only do rejoice with me. It is so sad to rejoice alone. Well, won't you help yourself —

FRANCISCA. I would be stealing it from you, my lady; you are drunk, drunk with joy. —

MINNA. Girl, I am quarrelsome when tipsy. Take it, or — [*She forces the money into her hand.*] And if you dare to thank me! — Wait; it is well that I thought of it. [*Thrusting her hand into the money box again for money.*] This, dear Francisca, put aside for the first poor wounded soldier who accosts us. —

SCENE FOUR

LANDLORD. MINNA. FRANCISCA

MINNA. Well? Will he come?

LANDLORD. The ugly, unmannerly fellow!

MINNA. Who?

LANDLORD. His servant. He refuses to go for him.

FRANCISCA. Just bring the rascal here. I fancy I know all the Major's servants. Which one might this be, I wonder?

MINNA. Bring him here quickly. When he sees us he will go fast enough.

[*Exit LANDLORD.*]

SCENE FIVE

MINNA. FRANCISCA

MINNA. I can hardly await the moment. But, Francisca, you are still as cold as before? You are still not ready to rejoice with me?

FRANCISCA. I should be ready with all my heart; if only —

MINNA. If only?

FRANCISCA. We have found the man again; but in what state have we found him? From all we hear of him he must be having hard luck. He must be unhappy. That distresses me.

MINNA. Distresses you? — Let me embrace you for this, my dearest comrade! I shall never cease to thank you for it! — I am only in love, while you are good. —

SCENE SIX

LANDLORD. JUST. MINNA. FRANCISCA

LANDLORD. It was all I could do to bring him.

FRANCISCA. A strange face! I do not know him.

MINNA. My friend, are you in the service of Major von Tellheim?

JUST. Yes.

MINNA. Where is your master?

JUST. Not here.

MINNA. But you know where to find him?

JUST. Yes.

MINNA. Will you not fetch him here quickly?

JUST. No.

MINNA. You will be doing me a favor thereby. —

JUST. Indeed!

MINNA. And your master a service. —

JUST. And possibly not. —

MINNA. Why do you imagine that?

JUST. Are you not the strange lady who sent him her compliments this morning?

MINNA. Yes.

JUST. Then I am right enough.

MINNA. Does your master know my name?

JUST. No; but he can stand over-polite ladies as little as over-insolent landlords.

LANDLORD. That includes me, too, I suppose?

JUST. Yes.

LANDLORD. Then at least don't let her ladyship suffer for it; and bring him here quickly.

MINNA. [to FRANCISCA]. Francisca, give him something —

FRANCISCA. [*trying to press some money into JUST's hand*]. We do not ask your services for nothing. —

JUST. Nor I your money without services.

FRANCISCA. One in return for the other. —

JUST. I cannot. My master has ordered me to move his things. That's what I am doing now, and that's what I wish not to be hindered at, if you please. When I have finished, I dare say I'll tell him that he may come here. He is at the coffee-house next door, and if he finds nothing better to do there, I dare say he will come. [*Going.*]

FRANCISCA. Just wait a minute, please. — Her ladyship is the Major's — sister. —

MINNA. Yes, yes, his sister.

JUST. I know better, the Major has no sister. He sent me to his family in Courland twice within six months. — To be sure, there are many kinds of sisters —

FRANCISCA. Impudent fellow!

JUST. Doesn't one have to be, if one is to be let alone? [*Exit.*]

FRANCISCA. What a rascal!

LANDLORD. I told you so. But just let him go! For now I know where his master is. I will instantly fetch him myself. — Only, your ladyship, I beg you most humbly to be sure and

make my excuses to the Major, at the proper time, that I was so unfortunate, against my will, to —— er —— a man of his merits ——

MINNA. Pray go quickly, landlord. I will set all that right again. [*Exit LANDLORD.* MINNA *continues.*] Francisca, run after him; tell him not to mention my name to his master. [*Exit FRANCISCA after LANDLORD.*]

SCENE SEVEN

MINNA, and later FRANCISCA

MINNA. He is mine again! — Am I alone? — I will not be alone in vain. [*Clasping her hands*] Nor am I alone! [*and looking upwards*]. One single grateful thought raised to Heaven is the most perfect prayer! — He is mine, he is mine! [*With outstretched arms.*] Oh, I am happy! and jubilant! What can be dearer in the sight of the Creator than a jubilant creature! — [*Enter FRANCISCA.*] Are you back again, Francisca? — You pity him? I do not pity him. Misfortune has its good side too. Perhaps, Heaven took everything from him only to give it back again in me!

FRANCISCA. He may be here any minute now. — You are still in your morning dress, my lady. Hadn't you better dress yourself quickly?

MINNA. Why, how absurd! From now on he will see me oftener like this than dressed up.

FRANCISCA. Oh, you know how you look best, my lady.

MINNA. [*after a little reflection*]. Truly, girl, you have hit it again.

FRANCISCA. When we are beautiful, we are most beautiful unadorned.

MINNA. Who says that we must be beautiful? — But it was necessary, perhaps, that we should think ourselves so. — No, if only I am beautiful to him, to him! — Francisca, if all girls are such as I feel myself now, then we are — strange creatures. — Tender and haughty, virtuous and vain, passionate and gentle. — But you will not understand me. I dare say I do not understand myself. — Joy turns one's head, makes a person dizzy. —

FRANCISCA. Compose yourself, my lady; I hear someone coming. —

MINNA. Compose myself? Could you expect me to receive him calmly?

SCENE EIGHT

TELLHEIM. LANDLORD. THE ABOVE

TELLHEIM. [*enters, and as he catches sight of her, rushes forward*]. Ah! my Minna! —

MINNA. [*rushing towards him*]. Ah! my Tellheim! —

TELLHEIM. [*stopping suddenly and stepping back*]. Pardon me, Madam — to find the Lady of Barnhelm here —

MINNA. Surely cannot be so entirely unexpected to you? [*While she approaches him and he draws back further.*] I am to pardon you that I am still your Minna? May Heaven pardon you that I am still the Lady of Barnhelm! —

TELLHEIM. Madam — [*stares at the LANDLORD and shrugs his shoulders*].

MINNA. [*becomes aware of the LANDLORD and motions to FRANCISCA*]. Sir, —

TELLHEIM. If we are not both of us mistaken —

FRANCISCA. Why, Mr. Landlord, whom have you brought us here? Quick, come, let's look for the right one.

LANDLORD. Isn't he the right one? Surely there's no mistake!

FRANCISCA. Surely, there is a mistake. Quick, come, I have not yet said "good morning" to Mademoiselle your daughter.

LANDLORD. Oh! a great honor — [*yet without leaving the spot*].

FRANCISCA. [*taking hold of him*]. Come, we

will make out the *menu*. — Let's see what we shall have. —

LANDLORD. You shall have first —

FRANCISCA. Stop, I entreat you, stop! If her ladyship knows as early as this what she is to have for dinner, it is all up with her appetite. Come, you must tell it to me in private. [*Leads him away forcibly.*]

SCENE NINE

TELLHEIM. MINNA

MINNA. Well? Are we still mistaken?

TELLHEIM. Would to Heaven we were! — But there is only one Minna, and you are she.

MINNA. What ceremony! What we have to say to each other everyone may hear.

TELLHEIM. You here? What do you seek here, Madam?

MINNA. I seek nothing more. [*Going towards him with open arms.*] All that I sought I have found.

TELLHEIM. [*retreating*]. You sought a prosperous man, a man worthy of your love; and you find — a wretch!

MINNA. Then you love me no longer? — and love another?

TELLHEIM. Ah! he has never loved you, dear lady, who can love another after you.

MINNA. You pluck only *one* thorn from my soul. — If I have lost your heart, what matters it whether it was indifference or mightier charms that robbed me of it? — You love me no longer, neither do you love another? — Unhappy man, if you love nothing at all! —

TELLHEIM. Right, Madam; the unfortunate man must love nothing. He deserves his misfortune if he cannot achieve this victory over himself; if he is willing to let those he loves participate in his misfortune. — Oh, how hard a victory it is! — Since reason and necessity have commanded me to forget Minna von Barnhelm, what pains have I not taken! I was just beginning to hope that these pains would not be forever in vain: — and you appear, Madam! —

MINNA. Do I understand you aright? — Hold, sir; let us see where we are before we stray any further! — Will you answer me a single question?

TELLHEIM. Any question, my lady. —

MINNA. Will you answer me without shift, without evasion? With nothing but a plain yes or no?

TELLHEIM. I will, — if I can.

MINNA. You can. — Good. Notwithstanding the pains which you took to forget me, — do you still love me, Tellheim?

TELLHEIM. Madam, this question —

MINNA. You promised to answer by nothing but yes or no.

TELLHEIM. And added: if I can.

MINNA. You can; you must know what passes in your heart. — Do you still love me, Tellheim? — Yes or no!

TELLHEIM. If my heart —

MINNA. Yes or no!

TELLHEIM. Well, then, yes!

MINNA. Yes?

TELLHEIM. Yes, yes! — Only —

MINNA. Patience! — You love me still: that is enough for me. — What a tone I have taken with you! An unpleasant, melancholy, infectious tone. — I will resume my own again. — Now, my dear unfortunate, you love me still, and you have your Minna still, and you are unhappy? Just hear, what a silly conceited thing your Minna was, — and is. She allowed, allows herself to imagine that she is your whole happiness. — Quick, make a clean breast of your misfortune. Let her try how much of it she can counterbalance. — Well?

TELLHEIM. My lady, I am not wont to complain.

MINNA. Very well. Nor do I know what, next to boasting, would displease me more in a soldier than complaining. But there is a certain cool, nonchalant way of speaking of one's bravery and of one's misfortune —

TELLHEIM. Which, at bottom, amounts equally to boasting and complaining.

MINNA. Oh, my dogmatical friend, then you should not have called yourself unfortunate in the first place. — Either keep absolutely silent, or out with all you have to say. — A reason, a necessity which commands you to forget me? — I am a great lover of reason; I have very great reverence for necessity. — But do let me hear how reasonable is this reason, how necessary this necessity.

TELLHEIM. Very well; then listen, Madam. — You call me Tellheim; the name is correct. — But you think that I am the Tellheim whom you knew in your fatherland: the man blooming with health, filled with expectations, filled with ambitions; who was master of his whole body, his whole soul; before whom the lists of honor and of fortune stood open; who dared to hope, even though he was not yet worthy of your heart and hand, that he might day by day become more

nearly worthy of them. — I am this Tellheim as little — as I am my father. They both are of the past. — I am Tellheim, the discharged, the wounded in his honor, the cripple, the beggar. — To the former, Madam, you promised yourself; will you keep your word to the latter?

MINNA. That sounds very tragic! — Still, Major, until I find the former again, — seeing that I am crazy about the Tellheims, — the latter will have to help me out of the difficulty. — Your hand, dear beggar! [*Seizing him by the hand.*]

TELLHEIM. [*by his other hand quickly covering his face with his hat, and turning away from her.*] This is too much! — Where am I? — Let me go, Madam! Your kindness tortures me! — Let me go!

MINNA. What is the matter? Whither would you go?

TELLHEIM. Away from you! —

MINNA. Away from me? [*Drawing his hand to her breast.*] Dreamer!

TELLHEIM. Despair will lay me dead at your feet.

MINNA. Away from me?

TELLHEIM. Away from you. — Never, never to see you again. — Or at any rate so determined, so firmly determined — to commit no

baseness, — to let you commit no imprudence.
— Let me go, Minna! [*Tears himself free, exit.*]

MINNA. [*following him*]. Minna let you go?
Tellheim! Tellheim!

End of Act Two

ACT THREE

SCENE ONE

[The scene is laid in the parlor]

JUST *[a letter in his hand]*

JUST. Must I enter this accursed house once more after all! — A note from my master to the young lady who pretends to be his sister. — I only hope this isn't the beginning of a love affair! — Otherwise there will be no end to the carrying of notes. — I should like to get rid of it; but on the other hand I don't like to go into that room. — Women folk ask so many questions; and I do so hate to answer! — Ha! the door is opening. Just what I wanted! This pussy of a maid!

SCENE TWO

FRANCISCA. JUST

FRANCISCA. *[calling back through the doorway, from which she is issuing]*. Do not worry; I will be on the watch. — See! *[as she perceives JUST]*. Here I am running into something right away.

But there is no use doing anything with this brute.

JUST. Your servant. —

FRANCISCA. I would not have such a servant.

JUST. Well, well, pardon the expression! — Here I bring a note from my master to your mistress, her ladyship, his — sister? — Wasn't that it? — Sister.

FRANCISCA. Give it here! [*Snatches the letter from his hand.*]

JUST. You will be good enough, so my master begs, to deliver it. Then you will be good enough, so my master begs — don't on any account think that *I* am asking any favor!

FRANCISCA. Well?

JUST. My master knows what's what. He knows that you can best get at the ladies by way of their maids, — I fancy! You will then be good enough, Miss, — so my master begs, — to send him word if he may not have the pleasure of a quarter of an hour's talk with you, Miss.

FRANCISCA. With me?

JUST. Yes, with you! — Only a quarter of an hour, but alone, quite alone, in private, *tête-à-tête*. He says he has something very important to say to you.

FRANCISCA. Good! I have much to say to him too. — He may come; I shall be at his service.

JUST. But when can he come? When is it most convenient for you, Miss? Perhaps — hm — at twilight? —

FRANCISCA. What do you mean by that? — Your master can come when he likes; and now, be off with you!

JUST. With all my heart! [*About to go.*]

FRANCISCA. But listen! one word more. — Tell me, where are the Major's other servants?

JUST. The others? Here, there, and everywhere.

FRANCISCA. Where is William?

JUST. The valet? The Major lets him travel.

FRANCISCA. Indeed? And Philip, where is he?

JUST. The huntsman? The Major has given him into safe-keeping.

FRANCISCA. Because he has no shooting now, no doubt. But Martin?

JUST. The coachman? He rode off.

FRANCISCA. And Fritz?

JUST. The footman? He has moved ahead.

FRANCISCA. But where were you, when the Major was quartered with us in Thuringia that winter? You were not yet in his service, I suppose?

JUST. Oh, yes, I was his groom; but I was in the hospital.

FRANCISCA. Groom? And now you are? —

JUST. All in one, valet and huntsman, footman and groom.

FRANCISCA. Well, I must say! To let so many good, capable people go and to keep the very worst of all! I should like to know what your master could find in you!

JUST. Perhaps he finds that I am an honest fellow.

FRANCISCA. Oh, a man is precious little indeed, if he is nothing but honest. — William was a different sort of person! — Your master lets him travel, you say?

JUST. Yes, he lets him — because he cannot help it.

FRANCISCA. What's that?

JUST. Oh, William will do himself proud on his travels. He has master's whole wardrobe with him.

FRANCISCA. What? Surely he did not run away with it?

JUST. Well, one cannot just say that; only that when we left Nuremberg he did not follow us with it.

FRANCISCA. Oh, the rogue!

JUST. He was quite a man! He knew how to dress the hair and shave the face, and chatter in French, — and charm the girls. — Didn't he?

FRANCISCA. That being so, I should not have

dismissed the huntsman, if I had been the Major. Even if he could not make use of him as a huntsman, he was a capable fellow in other ways. In whose safe-keeping did he put him, I wonder?

JUST. Into that of the Commandant of Spandau.

FRANCISCA. The fortress? The hunting upon the ramparts cannot amount to very much.

JUST. Oh, but Philip is not hunting there.

FRANCISCA. What is he doing?

JUST. He is driving a barrow.

FRANCISCA. Driving a barrow?

JUST. But only for three years. He started a little conspiracy among master's company and tried to get six men through the outposts. —

FRANCISCA. I am amazed; the villain!

JUST. Oh, he is a good one! A huntsman who knows all the footpaths, all the by-ways through forest and marsh for fifty miles around. And such a shot!

FRANCISCA. A good thing, at least, that the Major still has the honest coachman!

JUST. He has him still, has he?

FRANCISCA. I think you said Martin had ridden away? Then he will surely come back again?

JUST. Do you think so?

FRANCISCA. Where did he ride to?

JUST. It is now more than nine weeks since he rode the Major's last and only saddle-horse—to the horse-pond.

FRANCISCA. And isn't back yet? Oh, the gallowsbird!

JUST. Possibly the horse-pond washed the honest coachman away!—He was such a first-rate coachman! He had been driving in Vienna for ten years. Master will not get his like again. If the horses were at full speed he had only to say: Brr! and immediately they would stand like a wall. Moreover, he was a trained farrier!

FRANCISCA. Now I begin to have some misgivings about the advancement of the footman.

JUST. No, no, that's all straight. He has become drummer in a garrison regiment.

FRANCISCA. I thought as much.

JUST. Fritz never came home nights, contracted debts everywhere in master's name, and played a thousand low tricks. In short, the Major saw that he was striving with all his might for a higher place [*indicating hanging in pantomime*]; so he put him in the way of it.

FRANCISCA. Oh, the rascal!

JUST. But he was a perfect footman, that is certain. If master gave him fifty paces start, he

could not overtake him with his best racer. Fritz, on the other hand, can give the gallows a thousand paces start, and I'll wager my life he will overtake it. — I suppose they were all good friends of yours, Miss? — William and Philip, Martin and Fritz? — Well, Just bids you good day. [*Exit.*]

SCENE THREE

FRANCISCA, and later THE LANDLORD

FRANCISCA. [*looking after him earnestly*]. I deserve the sting! — Thank you, Just. I underrated honesty too much. I will not forget the lesson. — Ah! the unfortunate man! [*Turning and about to go to her mistress' room, as the LANDLORD enters.*]

LANDLORD. Wait a bit, my dear.

FRANCISCA. I have no time now, landlord. —

LANDLORD. Just a moment! — No further news from the Major? That could not possibly have been his farewell! —

FRANCISCA. What do you mean?

LANDLORD. Hasn't her ladyship told you about it? — When I left you, my dear, downstairs in the kitchen, I came back by chance here into the parlor. —

FRANCISCA. By chance — with the intention of eavesdropping a little.

LANDLORD. Ah, my child, how can you think that of me? Nothing is so unseemly in a landlord as curiosity. — I had not been here long, when all of a sudden the door of her ladyship's room flew open. The Major rushed out; her ladyship after him; both in such excitement, with such looks, in such an attitude — such a thing must be seen to be appreciated. She seized him; he tore himself free; she seized him again. "Tellheim!" — "Madam, let me go!" — "Whither?" — Thus he drew her to the very stairway. I was really afraid he would pull her down with him. But he did manage to break loose. Her ladyship remained standing on the top step, looked after him, called after him, wrung her hands. All at once she turned, ran to the window, from the window to the stairway, from the stairway up and down the parlor. Here I stood; here three times she passed me without seeing me. Finally it seemed as if she saw me, but God be with us! I believe her ladyship took me for you, my child. "Francisca," she cried, her eyes fixed upon me, "am I happy now?" — Thereupon she gazed fixedly at the ceiling, and again: "Am I happy now?" And then she wiped the tears from her eyes and smiled and asked me again: "Francisca, am I happy now?" — Really, I did not know how I

felt. Finally she ran to her door; there once more she turned round to me: "Why don't you come, Francisca; whom do you pity now?" — and with that she went in.

FRANCISCA. Oh, Mr. Landlord, you have dreamed that.

LANDLORD. Dreamed? No, my pretty one, one does not dream so circumstantially. — Oh, what wouldn't I give, — I am not curious, — but what wouldn't I give if only I had the key to it.

FRANCISCA. The key? to our door? Mr. Landlord, that is on the inside; we took it in for the night; we are timid.

LANDLORD. Not that kind of a key; I mean, my dear, the key, the interpretation, as it were, the exact connections, so to speak, of what I have seen. —

FRANCISCA. Ah, that's it! — Well, adieu, Mr. Landlord. Are we to dine soon, Mr. Landlord?

LANDLORD. My pretty one, lest I forget my real errand —

FRANCISCA. Well? — but be brief. —

LANDLORD. Her ladyship has my ring still; I call it mine —

FRANCISCA. You shall not lose it.

LANDLORD. Oh, I am not at all worried about it; I only wanted to mention it. Look

you, I do not even want it back again. I can easily guess how she came to know the ring, and why it resembled hers so much. It is safest in her hands. I do not want it again at all, and will meanwhile put down the hundred pistoles which I advanced on it, in her ladyship's bill. Will not that do, my dear?

SCENE FOUR

PAUL WERNER. LANDLORD. FRANCISCA

WERNER. Ah, there he is!

FRANCISCA. A hundred pistoles? I thought it was only eighty.

LANDLORD. That's true, only ninety, only ninety. I'll do that, my dear, I'll do that.

FRANCISCA. We shall see about all that, Mr. Landlord.

WERNER. [*approaching them from behind, and all of a sudden clapping FRANCISCA on the shoulder*]. Little woman! little woman!

FRANCISCA. [*startled*]. Oh!

WERNER. Don't be frightened! — Little woman, little woman, I see you are pretty, and probably quite a stranger here — And pretty strangers must be warned — Little woman, little woman, be on your guard against that man! [*Pointing to the LANDLORD.*]

LANDLORD. Ah, an unexpected pleasure! Master Paul Werner! Welcome in our midst, welcome! — Ah, he is still and always the same jovial, jocular, honest Werner! — So you are to be on your guard against me, my pretty one! Ha, ha, ha!

WERNER. Avoid him, wherever you can.

LANDLORD. Me! me! — Do you think I am so dangerous? — Ha, ha, ha! — Just listen to him, my dear! How do you like the joke?

WERNER. How queer that the likes of him always call it a joke when one tells them the truth.

LANDLORD. The truth! Ha, ha, ha! — Better than ever, isn't it, my dear? The man certainly knows how to joke! Me dangerous? — me? — Twenty years or so ago there might have been some truth in that. Yes, yes, my pretty girl; then I *was* dangerous; then many a girl might have told you about it; but now —

WERNER. Oh, the old fool!

LANDLORD. That's just where the trouble lies! When we grow old we are no longer dangerous. You will not fare differently either, Master Werner.

WERNER. No end of a fool, I swear! — Little woman, you will surely credit me with enough sense not to be talking of *that* kind of danger

from him. The one devil has left him, but seven others have entered into him instead. —

LANDLORD. Oh, just listen to that, just listen to that. How he can ring the changes! — Joke upon joke, and always something new! Oh, he is a fine man, is Master Paul Werner! — [*To FRANCISCA in a stage whisper.*] A well-to-do man, and still single. He has a fine piece of property three miles from here. He made prize-money in the war! — And was sergeant under our Major. Oh, here is a friend of our Major's, here is a friend who would willingly be killed for him! —

WERNER. Yes! and here is a friend of my Major's, here is a friend — whom the Major ought to order to be killed.

LANDLORD. How? What? — No, Master Werner, that is not good joking. — I no friend of the Major's? — No, I don't see the joke of that.

WERNER. Just has been telling me fine things.

LANDLORD. Just? I thought as much, that Just was speaking through you. Just is a mean, detestable man. But here is a pretty girl on the spot; she can speak; let her say if I am no friend of the Major's? whether I have not done him some services? And why should I not be his

friend? Is he not a man of merits? It is true, he has had the misfortune to be discharged: but what difference does that make? The King cannot know all men of merit; and even if he knew them all, he cannot reward them all.

WERNER. The Lord put that into your mouth! — But Just — to be sure, Just is no angel; yet Just is no liar; and if what he told me should be true —

LANDLORD. I'll hear no more of Just! As I said, let the pretty girl here speak! [*In a stage whisper to her.*] You know, my child: the ring! — Tell Master Werner about it, do. Then he will know me better. And so that you won't seem to be speaking only to please me, I will not even be present. I will not be present; I will go; but in time you shall tell me, Master Werner, in time you shall tell me, if Just is not an ugly slanderer.

SCENE FIVE

PAUL WERNER. FRANCISCA

WERNER. Little woman, tell me, do you know my Major?

FRANCISCA. Major von Tellheim? Yes, indeed, I know the good man.

WERNER. Is he not a good man? Do you like him, I wonder? —

FRANCISCA. From the bottom of my heart.

WERNER. Really? Look you, little woman, now you become twice as pretty to me. — But what sort of services may these be which the landlord claims to have rendered our Major?

FRANCISCA. I really do not know; unless he wanted to take the credit to himself for the good which luckily resulted from his knavish conduct.

WERNER. Then what Just told me was indeed true? — [*Towards the side where the LANDLORD went out.*] Lucky for you that you have gone! — Did he really turn him out of his rooms? — To play such a trick upon such a man because the donkey imagines that the man has no more money! The Major no money!

FRANCISCA. Indeed? Has the Major money?

WERNER. By the load! He doesn't know how much he has. He doesn't know who is in his debt. I myself am indebted to him, and am bringing him a bit of old arrears. Look you, little woman, here in this purse [*which he draws from one pocket*] are a hundred louis d'or; and in this little roll [*which he draws from the other*] a hundred ducats. All *his* money!

FRANCISCA. Really? But then why does the Major pawn things? For you know he has pawned a ring —

WERNER. Pawned! Don't you believe such

a thing. Perhaps he wanted to be rid of the rubbish.

FRANCISCA. It is no rubbish! It is a very precious ring, which he received, moreover, from beloved hands.

WERNER. No doubt that's just it. From beloved hands! Yes, yes! Such a thing often recalls something you don't like recalled. Therefore you put it out of sight.

FRANCISCA. What's that?

WERNER. Odd things happen to a soldier in winter quarters. There he has nothing to do, and pampers himself, and for sheer pastime makes acquaintances which he means only for the winter; and which the good soul with whom he makes them accepts as if they were meant for life. Presto! a little ring is charmed on to his finger; he himself knows not how it came there. And often he would willingly give the finger along with the ring if he could only get rid of it again.

FRANCISCA. Indeed! And might this have happened to the Major too?

WERNER. Most certainly. Especially in Saxony; if he had had ten fingers on each hand, he would have had all twenty of them full of rings.

FRANCISCA. [*aside*]. Why, that sounds quite

interesting, and deserves to be investigated.——
Now, Squire, or Sergeant —

WERNER. My little woman, if you don't mind, — I prefer Sergeant. —

FRANCISCA. Well, Sergeant, here I have a note from the Major to my mistress. I'll just carry it in quickly and will be back again immediately. Will you be so good as to wait here until then? I should like ever so much to chat more with you.

WERNER. Do you like to chat, little woman? Well, I don't mind; run along; I like to chat too; I will wait.

FRANCISCA. Oh, yes, please do wait. [*Exit.*]

SCENE SIX

PAUL WERNER

WERNER. That's not a bad little woman! — Yet I should not have promised her to wait. — For I suppose the most important thing is to look up the Major. — He will not have my money, and prefers to pawn things? — That is just like him. — Ah, a good trick occurs to me. — When I was in the city a fortnight ago, I called on the widow of Captain Marloff. The poor woman was lying sick and lamenting because her husband had died owing the Major

four hundred dollars which she did not know how to pay. To-day I was going to call on her again; — I was going to tell her that when I was paid off for my farm I could lend her five hundred dollars. For of course I must put some of it by, in case things go wrong in Persia. — But the bird had flown. And she certainly cannot have been able to pay the Major. — Yes, that's what I'll do; and the sooner the better. — I hope the little woman won't take it amiss; I can't wait. [*Exit deep in thought and almost runs into the MAJOR who comes from the opposite direction.*]

SCENE SEVEN

TELLHEIM. PAUL WERNER

TELLHEIM. So wrapt in thought, Werner?

WERNER. Ah, there you are; I was just going to visit you in your new quarters, Major.

TELLHEIM. In order to give me an earful, cursing the landlord of the old ones. Never mind that.

WERNER. I should have done that incidentally; indeed I should. But my real purpose was simply to thank you for your kindness in taking care of my five hundred louis d'or. Just has returned them to me. I confess I should be

glad if you could keep them for me a little longer. But you have moved into new lodgings, which neither you nor I know much about. Who knows what it's like there? They might be stolen from you there, and you would have to make them good; there would be no help for that. So, of course, I cannot expect it of you.

TELLHEIM. [*smiling*]. Since when are you so cautious, Werner?

WERNER. One learns it by experience. Now-a-days one cannot be too cautious with his money. — And then I also had a commission for you, Major; from Widow Marloff; I have just come from her. You recollect her husband owed you four hundred dollars; she sends you here one hundred ducats on account. The rest she means to send next week. I myself may have been the cause of her failure to send the entire amount. For she also owed me a matter of eighty thalers; and because she thought I had come to dun her, — which was indeed the truth, — she gave them to me out of the roll which she had already put aside for you. — And you can do without your hundred dollars for a week or so better than I could without my paltry few shillings. — There, won't you please take this? [*Handing him the roll of ducats.*]

TELLHEIM. Werner!

WERNER. Well? Why do you stare at me like that? — Come, take it, Major! —

TELLHEIM. Werner!

WERNER. What is the matter with you? What are you angry about?

TELLHEIM. [*bitterly, striking his brow and stamping his foot*]. Because — because the four hundred thalers are not complete!

WERNER. Now, now, Major! Didn't you understand me?

TELLHEIM. It is just because I did understand you! — To think that it should be the best people who torture me most to-day!

WERNER. What are you saying?

TELLHEIM. Only half of it is meant for you! — Go, Werner! [*Thrusting back the hand with which WERNER offers the ducats.*]

WERNER. As soon as I am rid of this!

TELLHEIM. Werner, what if you should now hear from me that the Widow Marloff herself was here the first thing this morning?

WERNER. Indeed?

TELLHEIM. That she no longer owes me anything?

WERNER. Really?

TELLHEIM. That she has paid me to the last farthing: what will you say then?

WERNER. [*reflecting a moment*]. I shall say

that I have lied, and that lying is a scurvy business, because one may be caught in the act.

TELLHEIM. And you will feel ashamed of yourself?

WERNER. But he who forces me to lie like this, — what of him? Ought not he also to feel ashamed? See here, Major; if I were to say that your conduct does not vex me, I should be lying again, and I will lie no more. —

TELLHEIM. Don't be cross, Werner! I know your heart, and your love for me. But I do not need your money.

WERNER. You do not need it? And you prefer to sell things, and prefer to pawn things, and prefer to get yourself talked about?

TELLHEIM. People are welcome to know that I have nothing left. One must not wish to appear richer than one is.

WERNER. But why poorer? — We have something as long as our friend has anything.

TELLHEIM. It is not fitting that I should be your debtor.

WERNER. Not fitting? — On a hot day, — made hot for us by the sun and the enemy — when your groom with the canteens was missing, and you came to me and said: "Werner, have you nothing to drink?" and I handed you my canteen, you took it and drank, didn't you? —

Was that fitting? Upon my poor soul, wasn't a drink of stale water at such a time often worth more than all this rubbish? [*Pulling out also the purse with the louis d'or, and holding out both to him.*] Take them, dear Major! Imagine that it is water. This, too, God has created for us all.

TELLHEIM. You torture me; don't you hear me? I do not want to be your debtor.

WERNER. First it was not fitting; now you don't want to? Yes, that is a different matter. [*Somewhat peevishly.*] You don't want to be my debtor? But suppose you already were, what then, Major? Or do you owe nothing to the man who once warded off the blow intended to split your head open, and another time struck from the body the hand just about to pull the trigger and send a bullet through your breast? — How can you become more indebted to that man? Or is my neck of less consequence than my purse? — If that is what you call a noble way of thinking, by my poor soul, it is also a very distasteful way of thinking!

TELLHEIM. To whom are you speaking like that, Werner? We are alone; so I may say it; if a third person were to hear us, it would be bragging. I acknowledge with pleasure that twice you saved my life. But, my friend, why

did I fail to prove, on occasion, that I should have done the same for you? Eh?

WERNER. Why, only for lack of that occasion! Who has doubted it, Major? Have I not seen you a hundred times risk your life for the commonest soldier, when he had got into a tight place?

TELLHEIM. Well, then?

WERNER. But —

TELLHEIM. Why do you not understand me aright? I say: it is not fitting that I should be your debtor; I will not be your debtor. That is, not in the circumstances in which I now find myself.

WERNER. Ah, so! You want to put it off till better times; you are going to borrow money from me some other time, when you need none, when you yourself have some, and I perhaps none.

TELLHEIM. One ought not to borrow when one does not know how to pay back.

WERNER. With a man like you things cannot go amiss forever.

TELLHEIM. You know the world! — Least of all, moreover, should one borrow from a person who needs his money himself.

WERNER. Oh, yes, that's me, is it? Pray, what do I need it for? — Where people need a

sergeant, they are sure to give him enough to live on.

TELLHEIM. You need it to become something more than a sergeant; to advance yourself in a career in which, without money, even the most deserving is liable to be left behind.

WERNER. To become more than a sergeant? Such a thing is far from my mind. I am a good sergeant, and might easily become a bad captain and certainly a still worse general. That's a common experience.

TELLHEIM. Don't compel me to think ill of you, Werner! I was not pleased to hear what Just told me. You have sold your farm and intend to rove about again. Do not make me believe that you love, not so much the profession, as the wild, dissolute life that unfortunately is connected with it. One ought to be a soldier for one's country, or out of love for the cause which is at issue. To serve without any purpose, here to-day, there to-morrow, amounts to being a traveling butcher, nothing more.

WERNER. Very well then, Major; I will follow your advice. You know better what is proper. I will stay with you. — But, dear Major, do take my money in the meanwhile. Some day soon your affair must be settled. You

are sure to get money in plenty. Then you shall return it to me with interest. You know, I am doing it only for the sake of the interest.

TELLHEIM. Speak no more about it!

WERNER. By my poor soul, I am doing it only for the sake of the interest! — Sometimes when I have thought to myself: How will it be with you in your old age — when you are crippled and useless, when you will have nothing, when you will have to go abegging? — then I would think again: No, you will not go begging; you will go to Major Tellheim; he will share his last penny with you; he will feed you till the day of your death; with him you can die like an honest fellow.

TELLHEIM. [*grasping WERNER's hand*]. And, comrade, do you not think so still?

WERNER. No, I don't think so any more. — He who will accept nothing from me when he needs it and I have it, means likewise to give me nothing when he has and I need. — All right! — [*Going*.]

TELLHEIM. Man, do not drive me mad! Where are you going? [*Detaining him*.] If I assure you now upon my honor that I still have money; if I promise you upon my honor that I will tell you when I have no more — that you shall be the first and only person from whom I

will borrow anything: — will you then be satisfied?

WERNER. *Must* I not? — Give me your hand upon it, Major.

TELLHEIM. There, Paul! — And now enough of this. I came here to speak with a certain girl. —

SCENE EIGHT

FRANCISCA [*coming out of her lady's room*].

v. TELLHEIM. JUST

FRANCISCA. [*as she comes out*]. Are you still there, Sergeant? — [*becoming aware of TELLHEIM*]. And you are here too, Major? — I shall be at your service this minute. [*Going quickly back into the room.*]

SCENE NINE

v. TELLHEIM. PAUL WERNER

TELLHEIM. That was she! — But if I hear aright, you know her, Werner?

WERNER. Yes, I know the little woman. —

TELLHEIM. Yet, if I remember rightly, when I was in winter quarters in Thuringia, you were not with me?

WERNER. No, at that time I was purchasing uniforms in Leipsic.

TELLHEIM. Then how do you happen to know her?

WERNER. Our acquaintance is still in its infancy. It dates from to-day. But young acquaintance is warm.

TELLHEIM. Then, probably, you have already seen her young lady, too?

WERNER. Is her mistress a young lady? She told me you knew her mistress.

TELLHEIM. Don't you understand? From the Thuringian days.

WERNER. Is the lady young?

TELLHEIM. Yes.

WERNER. Fair?

TELLHEIM. Very fair.

WERNER. Rich?

TELLHEIM. Very rich.

WERNER. Does the lady like you as well as the maid does? That would be capital indeed!

TELLHEIM. What do you mean?

SCENE TEN

FRANCISCA [*coming out again with a letter in her hand*]. v. TELLHEIM. PAUL WERNER

FRANCISCA. Major von Tellheim —

TELLHEIM. Dear Francisca, I have not yet had an opportunity to bid you welcome.

FRANCISCA. But in your mind you have surely done that already. I know you like me. I like you, too. But it is not at all nice to cause such uneasiness to people who like you.

WERNER. [*aside*]. Ah, now I understand. It is as I supposed!

TELLHEIM. My luck, Francisca! — Did you deliver the letter to her?

FRANCISCA. Yes, and here I deliver to you — [*Handing him the letter.*]

TELLHEIM. An answer?

FRANCISCA. No, your own letter again.

TELLHEIM. What? She is not willing to read it?

FRANCISCA. She was willing enough; but — we cannot read writing well.

TELLHEIM. Little wag!

FRANCISCA. And we think that letter-writing was not invented for those who can converse with each other by word of mouth whenever they like.

TELLHEIM. What a pretext! She must read it. It contains my justification — all the reasons and causes —

FRANCISCA. Which my lady wishes to hear from yourself, not to read.

TELLHEIM. To hear from myself? So that

every word, every gesture of hers may confuse me; so that in each of her glances I may realize the whole immensity of my loss? —

FRANCISCA. Without mercy! — Take it! [*Hands him the letter.*] She will expect you at three o'clock. She intends to drive out and see the city. You are to drive with her.

TELLHEIM. Drive with her?

FRANCISCA. And what will you give me if I let you two drive all by yourselves? I will stay at home.

TELLHEIM. All by ourselves?

FRANCISCA. In a fine closed carriage.

TELLHEIM. Impossible.

FRANCISCA. Yes, yes; in the carriage the Major will be cornered! there he cannot slip away from us. That is just why it is done. — In short, you will come, Major; and at three sharp. And you wanted to have a talk with me alone. Well? What have you to say to me? — Ah, but then, we are not alone. [*Looking at WERNER.*]

TELLHEIM. Yes, Francisca, as good as alone. But since her ladyship has not read the letter, I have nothing to say to you as yet.

FRANCISCA. Indeed? We are as good as alone? You have no secrets from the Sergeant?

TELLHEIM. No, none.

FRANCISCA. Well, all the same, it seems to me that you *should* have some from him.

TELLHEIM. How is that?

WERNER. Why is that, little woman?

FRANCISCA. Especially secrets of a certain kind. — All twenty, Sergeant? [*Holding up both hands with fingers spread.*]

WERNER. Hist! hist! little woman! little woman!

TELLHEIM. What is the meaning of this?

FRANCISCA. Presto on to the finger, Sergeant? [*As if she were quickly putting on a ring.*]

TELLHEIM. What are you two about?

WERNER. Little woman, little woman, don't you know how to take a joke?

TELLHEIM. Werner, I hope you have not forgotten what I have told you more than once: that one must never joke with women about a certain matter?

WERNER. By my poor soul, I may have forgotten it! — Little woman, please —

FRANCISCA. Well, if it was a joke, — this time I will forgive you.

TELLHEIM. Well then, if I positively must come, Francisca, then at least be sure that her ladyship reads the letter first. That will spare me the torture of thinking once more, of saying

once more, things I would so gladly forget. There, give it to her! [*As he turns the letter over and is about to give it to her he perceives that the seal is broken.*] But do I see aright? The letter, Francisca, has been opened.

FRANCISCA. That may be. [*Looking at it.*] But we really have not read it, Major, really and truly we have not. We don't want to read it, either, for the writer is coming in person. Come without fail; and let me tell you something, Major. Don't come as you are, in boots, with your hair almost unkempt. You are excusable; you did not expect us. But come in shoes, and have your hair dressed afresh. — This way you look far too military for me, far too Prussian!

TELLHEIM. Thank you, Francisca.

FRANCISCA. You look as if you had been camping out last night.

TELLHEIM. Perhaps you've struck it right.

FRANCISCA. We too will dress at once and then dine. We should like to keep you to dinner, but your presence might hinder us from eating; and observe, we are not quite so love-sick as not to be hungry.

TELLHEIM. I am going. Francisca, in the meantime prepare her a little, so that, neither in her eyes nor in my own, need I become con-

temptible. — Come, Werner, you shall dine with me.

WERNER. At the table d'hôte, here in this house? I shall not relish a single bite.

TELLHEIM. With me in my room.

WERNER. Then I will follow you immediately. But just a word first with the little woman.

TELLHEIM. I must say I rather like that.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE ELEVEN

PAUL WERNER. FRANCISCA

FRANCISCA. Well, Sergeant? —

WERNER. Little woman, when I come back, shall I too come more smartened up?

FRANCISCA. Come as you like, Sergeant; my eyes will have nothing against you. But my ears will have to be so much the more on their guard against you. — Twenty fingers, all full of rings! Oh, oh, Sergeant!

WERNER. Now, little woman, that was just what I was going to tell you about: the joke simply popped out in spite of me! There is nothing in it. I'm sure *one* ring is enough for any one. And hundreds and hundreds of times I have heard the Major say: He must be a scoundrel of a soldier who can deceive a girl! —

So think I too, little woman. Depend upon it! — I must hurry to overtake him. — Wishing you a good appetite, little woman! [*Exit.*]

FRANCISCA. The same to you, Sergeant! — I believe I like the man! [*Going in she meets her mistress coming out.*]

SCENE TWELVE

MINNA. FRANCISCA

MINNA. Is the Major gone already? — Francisca, I believe I am now again calm enough to have let him stay.

FRANCISCA. And I will make you still calmer.

MINNA. So much the better! His letter, oh, his letter! Every line bespoke the honorable, noble man. Every refusal to possess me assured me of his love. — He must have noticed that we had read the letter. — Well, no matter; if he does but come. He will come without fail? — Only, Francisca, there seems to be in his conduct a little too much pride. For not to be willing to owe one's good fortune even to one's beloved is pride, unpardonable pride! If he makes this too marked, Francisca —

FRANCISCA. Then you will give him up?

MINNA. Ah, look here! Aren't you already sorry for him again? No, dear silly, no man is

given up on account of *one* fault. No, but I have thought of a trick to torment him a little, for this pride of his, with a similar pride.

FRANCISCA. Well, then you must be very calm indeed, my lady, if already you are thinking of tricks again.

MINNA. And so I am; come along. You will have your part to play in it. [*They go in.*]

End of Act Three

ACT FOUR

SCENE ONE

[The scene is laid in MINNA'S room]

MINNA *[fully dressed, richly but with taste]*

FRANCISCA

[They are rising from the table, which a servant clears]

FRANCISCA. You cannot possibly have eaten enough, my lady.

MINNA. Do you think so, Francisca? Perhaps I was not hungry when I sat down.

FRANCISCA. We had agreed not to mention him during the meal. But we should also have resolved not to think of him.

MINNA. In truth I thought of nothing but him.

FRANCISCA. So I noticed. I began to talk of a hundred things, and you replied wrong every time. *[Another servant brings coffee.]* Here comes a beverage which goes better with the weaving of fancies. Dear melancholy coffee!

MINNA. Fancies? I am concocting none. I am merely thinking over the lesson which I am

going to give him. Did you grasp my meaning fully, Francisca?

FRANCISCA. Oh, yes! But it would be still better if he saved us the trouble of giving the lesson.

MINNA. You will see that I know him down to the ground. The man who refuses to accept me now with all my possessions will contend for me against the whole world as soon as he hears that I am unfortunate and abandoned.

FRANCISCA. [*very seriously*]. And such a thing must flatter the subtlest egotism tremendously. ✓

MINNA. Moralizer! look at her! A little while ago she convicted me of vanity, now it's of egotism. — Well, just leave me alone, dear Francisca. And I shall let you do as you like with your sergeant.

FRANCISCA. With my sergeant?

MINNA. Yes, your denial is the last proof needed. — I have not seen him yet; but from every word that you have said to me about him I prophesy your future husband.

SCENE TWO

RICCAUT DE LA MARLINIERE.¹ MINNA. FRANCISCA

RICCAUT. [*still behind the scenes*]. Est-il permis, Monsieur le Major?

FRANCISCA. What is that? Is that for us? [*Going towards the door*].

RICCAUT. Parbleu! I am meestake. — Mais non — I am not meestake — C'est sa chambre —

FRANCISCA. Unquestionably, my lady, this gentleman expects to find Major von Tellheim still here.

RICCAUT. Eet ees so! — Le Major de Tellheim; juste, ma belle enfant, c'est lui que je cherche. Où est-il?

FRANCISCA. He no longer lives here.

RICCAUT. Comment? before four and twenty hour 'e yet lodge 'ere? And lodge no more 'ere? W'ere, zen, lodge 'e?

MINNA. [*approaching him*]. Sir, —

RICCAUT. Ah, Madame, — Mademoiselle, — pardon, ladee —

MINNA. Sir, your mistake is quite pardonable, and your amazement very natural. The

¹The style of the French is that in use about the middle of the eighteenth century.

Major has had the kindness to give up his room to me, a stranger, who knew not where to seek shelter.

RICCAUT. Ah, voilà de ses politesses! C'est un très-galanthomme que ce Major!

MINNA. Where he has moved to meanwhile, — really, I am ashamed to confess that I do not know.

RICCAUT. Your ladeeship not know? C'est dommage; j'en suis fâché!

MINNA. To be sure I should have made inquiries about it. Of course his friends will still seek him here.

RICCAUT. I am much of 'ees friends, mee-ladee —

MINNA. Francisca, don't you know?

FRANCISCA. No, my lady. •

RICCAUT. I 'ave to spik 'eem, ver' necessar'. I come 'eem to bring a nouvelle of 'oom 'ee vill be ver' glad.

MINNA. I regret it all the more. — Yet I hope to see him, perhaps shortly. If it is immaterial from whose lips he learns this good news, I would offer, sir —

RICCAUT. I understan'. — Mademoiselle parle français? Mais sans doute; telle que je la vois! — La demande étoit bien impolie; Vous me pardonnerez Mademoiselle. —

MINNA. Sir —

RICCAUT. Not? You not spik French, mee-ladee?

MINNA. Sir, in France I should endeavor to speak it. But why here? I perceive that you understand me, sir. And I, sir, shall certainly understand you also; speak as you prefer.

RICCAUT. Goodd, goodd! I can explique me also in ze German. — Sachés donc, Mademoiselle, — ze ladee must zen know zat I come from ze table of ze Minister — ze Minister of — Minister of — 'ow calls 'eemself ze Minister out zere? — in ze long street? — on ze beeg place?—

MINNA. I am wholly unacquainted here as yet.

RICCAUT. Vell, ze Minister of ze Department*of ze War. — Zere I 'ave dine zis noon; I dine wiz 'eem à l'ordinaire, — and zere came one to spik of ze Major Tellheim; et le Ministre m'a dit en confidence, car Son Excellence est de mes amis, et il n'y a point de mystères entre nous — 'Ees Excellency, I wish to say, 'as confide to me zat ze affair of our Major eez on ze point to feeneesh, and to feeneesh goodd. 'E 'ave make a Rapport to ze King, and ze King 'ave zereupon resolve, tout-à-fait en faveur du Major. — Monsieur, m'a dit Son Excellence, Vous comprenés bien, que tout

dépend de la manière dont on fait envisager les choses au Roi, et Vous me connoissés. Cela fait un très-joli garçon que ce Tellheim, et ne sais-je pas que Vous l'aimés? Les amis de mes amis sont aussi les miens. Il coûte un peu cher au Roi ce Tellheim, mais est-ce que l'on sert les rois pour rien? Il faut s'entr'aider en ce monde; et quand il s'agit de pertes, que ce soit le Roi, qui en fasse, et non pas un honnêt-homme de nous autres. Voilà le principe, dont je ne me dépars jamais. — Vat say meeladee to zat? Not so, zat eez a fine man? Ah, que Son Excellence a le coeur bien placé! 'e 'ave me au reste assure, if ze Major 'ave not already receive une Lettre de la main — a royal 'and letter, zat 'e mus' receive one to-day infailliblement.

MINNA. Certainly, sir, this news will be most pleasing to Major Tellheim. I should only like, at the same time, to be able to name to him the friend who takes so much interest in his good fortune —

RICCAUT. Meeladee vish my name? — Vous voyés en moi — Meeladee see in me le Chevalier Riccaut de la Marliniere, Seigneur de Pret-au val, de la branche de Prens'd'or. — Meeladee stands amaze to 'ear me of so great, great familiee, qui est veritablement du sang

Royal. — Il faut le dire; je suis sans doute le Cadet le plus aventureux que la maison a jamais eu. — I serve since my eleven year. An affaire d'honneur make me to fly. After zat I 'ave serve 'Ees 'Oliness ze Pope, ze Republique of St. Marino, ze Crown of Poland and ze States General, until at ze last I am attrac' 'ere. Ah, Mademoiselle, que je voudrois n'avoir jamais vu ce pays-là! If only I 'ave been left in ze service of ze States General, zen now were I at ze least Colonel. But so ever and always 'ere to remain Capitaine, and now to be also a dismiss Capitaine —

MINNA. That is a deal of misfortune.

RICCAUT. Oui, Mademoiselle, me voilà reformé, et par-là mis sur le pavé!

MINNA. I am very sorry.

RICCAUT. Vous êtes bien bonne, Mademoiselle. — No, one knows not 'ere ze desert. To reform a man like me! — A man who besides zees have ruin 'eemself in zees service — I am zere a loser of more zan twenty t'ousand livres. Vat 'ave I now? Tranchons le mot; je n'ai pas le sou, et me voilà exactement vis-à-vis du rien. —

MINNA. I am extremely sorry.

RICCAUT. Vous êtes bien bonne, Mademoiselle. But as one use to say: every misfortune

drag 'eez brozer weez 'eem; qu'un malheur ne vient jamais seul: so it arrive to me. Vat can an honnêt-homme of my extraction 'ave for resource but ze play? Now I 'ave always play weez ze luck, so long as I need not ze luck. Now zat I should need 'er, Mademoiselle, je joue avec un guignon qui surpasse toute croyance. Since feefteen day not one ees pass vere zey not 'ave me broke. Only yesterday zey 'ave me bust t'ree time. Je sais bien, qu'il y avoit quelque chose de plus que le jeu. Car parmi mes pontes se trouvaient certaines dames. I vill say not'ing more. One mus' be gallant agains' ze ladees. Zey 'ave me also to-day invite, to give me revanche; mais — Vous m'entendés, Mademoiselle — One mus' first know weez vat to exeest, before one can 'ave weez vat to play. —

MINNA. I hope, sir —

RICCAUT. Vous êtes bien bonne, Mademoiselle —

MINNA. [*taking FRANCISCA aside*]. Francisca, I am really sorry for the man. I wonder if he would be offended, if I were to offer him something?

FRANCISCA. He does not look like that sort, to me.

MINNA. Good! — Sir, I understand — that

you play; that you keep bank; without doubt in places where there is something to win. I must confess to you that I — also am very fond of playing, —

RICCAUT. Tant mieux, Mademoiselle, tant mieux! Tous les gens d'esprit aiment le jeu à la fureur.

MINNA. — that I like very much to win; that I willingly risk my money with a man who — knows how to play. — I wonder if you would feel inclined, sir, to take me into partnership? To grant me a share in your bank?

RICCAUT. Comment, Mademoiselle. Vous voulés être de moitié avec moi? De tout mon coeur.

MINNA. At first only in a small way —
[*Goes and fetches money from her cash-box.*]

RICCAUT. Ah, Mademoiselle, que vous êtes charmante! —

MINNA. Here is what I won recently; only ten pistoles — though I am ashamed — such a trifle —

RICCAUT. Donnés toujours, Mademoiselle, donnés. [*Taking it.*]

MINNA. Without doubt, sir, your bank is very considerable —

RICCAUT. Yes indeed, ver' conseederable. Ten pistole? Meeladee shall for zat be interest

in my bank for one s'ird, pour le tiers. Alzo for ze s'ird should be — somesing more. Yet weez a preettee ladee one mus' not be so exac'. I make me my compliment zat I come into liaison weez meelady in zees manner, et de ce moment je recommence à bien augurer de ma fortune.

MINNA. I cannot, however, be present when you play, sir.

RICCAUT. Vat need meeladee be present? Ve ozzer players are 'onest peep' between one anoizzer.

MINNA. If we are lucky, sir, you will bring me my share, I know. But if we are unlucky —

RICCAUT. Zen I come to fetch ze recruits. Not so, meeladee?

MINNA. In the long run recruits might be lacking. Therefore be sure and protect our money well, sir.

RICCAUT. Vat eez it meeladee take me for? For a know-nossing? For a stupeed?

MINNA. Pardon me —

RICCAUT. Je suis des Bons, Mademoiselle. Savés-vous ce que cela veut dire? I am of ze graduate —

MINNA. But still, I hope, sir —

RICCAUT. Je sais monter un coup —

MINNA. [*amazed*]. Is it possible?

RICCAUT. Je file la carte avec une adresse —

MINNA. Never!

RICCAUT. Je fais sauter la coupe avec une dextérité —

MINNA. You wouldn't, surely, sir?

RICCAUT. For vy not? Meeladee, for vy not? Donnés-moi un pigeonneau à plumer, et —

MINNA. Play false? Cheat at the game?

RICCAUT. Comment, Mademoiselle? Vous appelés cela "cheat"? Corriger la fortune, l'enchaîner sous ses doigts, être sûr de son fait, zat call ze German "cheat"? Cheat! Oh, vat a poor tongue eez ze German tongue! Vat a clumsy tongue!

MINNA. Well, sir, if that is your way of thinking —

RICCAUT. Laissés-moi faire, Mademoiselle, and be tranquille! Vat eez it to you, 'ow I play? — Enough, to-morrow eezer meeladee see me again weez a 'undred pistole, or see me not at all — Votre très-humble, Mademoiselle, votre très-humble — [*Exit in haste.*]

MINNA. [*looking after him with amazement and annoyance*]. I prefer the latter, sir, the latter!

SCENE THREE

MINNA. FRANCISCA

FRANCISCA. [*bitterly*]. Can I find words? Oh, how beautiful, beautiful!

MINNA. Jeer away; I deserve it. [*After a little reflection and more calmly.*] Do not jeer, Francisca; I do not deserve it.

FRANCISCA. Excellent! Now you have done a very lovely thing: put a rascal on his feet again.

MINNA. It was intended for an unfortunate.

FRANCISCA. And the best part of it is, the fellow takes you for one of his sort. — Oh, I must go after him and get the money away from him again. [*Starts to go.*]

MINNA. Francisca, don't let the coffee get quite cold; fill the cups.

FRANCISCA. He must return it to you; you have changed your mind; you will not play in partnership with him. Ten pistoles! Did you not hear, my lady, that he was a beggar? [*MINNA meanwhile fills the cups herself.*] Who would give so much to a beggar? And seek, into the bargain, to spare him the humiliation of having begged it? The charitable person who out of generosity pretends to mistake the beggar is in return mistaken by the

beggar. It will serve you right, my lady, if he looks upon your gift as I know not what. — [MINNA *hands a cup to FRANCISCA.*] Do you want to make my blood boil still more? I do not care to drink it. [MINNA *sets the cup aside again.*] “Parbleu, meeladee, one knows not 'ere ze desert” [*mimicking the Frenchman*]. Surely not, when rogues like that are allowed to go at large unchanged.

MINNA. [*coldly, and deliberately while sipping her coffee*]. Girl, you are a very excellent judge of good people; but when will you learn to bear with the bad? — Yet they, too, are human beings. — And sometimes not nearly such bad people as they seem. — One has only to look for their good side. — I imagine this Frenchman is nothing worse than vain. From sheer vanity he makes himself out a sharper; he does not wish to seem under obligation to me; he wishes to spare himself the necessity of thanking me. Maybe he will go now, pay his petty debts, live quietly and economically on the balance as far as it will go, and have no thought of gambling. If that be so, dear Francisca, let him come for recruits whenever he likes. — [*Giving her the cup.*] There, set it aside! — But tell me, ought not Tellheim to be here by now?

FRANCISCA. No, my lady — I can do neither;

neither look for the good side in a bad person, nor for the bad side in a good person.

MINNA. You are sure he is coming?

FRANCISCA. He ought to stay away! — You perceive in him, in him, the best of men, a little pride — and that is why you want to tease him so cruelly?

MINNA. Are you coming back to that again? — No more of it; once for all, it is my will. If you spoil this pleasure for me, if you do not say and do everything as we have agreed! — I will just leave you alone with him; and then — That must be he coming.

SCENE FOUR

PAUL WERNER [*entering, stiffly erect, as if on duty*]. MINNA. FRANCISCA

FRANCISCA. No, it is only his dear sergeant.

MINNA. Dear sergeant? To whom does this "dear" refer?

FRANCISCA. My lady, pray do not embarrass the man. — Your servant, Sergeant; what news do you bring us?

WERNER. [*going up to MINNA, without taking any notice of FRANCISCA*]. Major von Tellheim presents his most respectful compliments to the Lady of Barnhelm through me, Sergeant Wer-

ner, and begs to inform her that he will be here directly.

MINNA. Where is he keeping himself?

WERNER. Your ladyship will pardon him: we left the quarters before the clock struck three; but on the way the Paymaster accosted him; and because it's always an endless talk with gentlemen of that sort, he gave me a sign to report the incident to your ladyship.

MINNA. Very well, Sergeant. I only hope that the Paymaster may have something pleasant to say to the Major.

WERNER. Gentlemen of that sort seldom have anything pleasant to say to officers. — Has your ladyship any commands? [*On the point of leaving.*]

FRANCISCA. Well, where are you off to so soon, Sergeant? Haven't you and I anything to chat about?

WERNER. [*in a whisper to FRANCISCA, seriously*]. Not here, little woman. It is contrary to discipline, contrary to the rules of the service. — Your ladyship —

MINNA. Thank you for your trouble, Sergeant. — I am glad to have made your acquaintance. Francisca has told me many good things about you. [WERNER makes a stiff bow and exit.]

SCENE FIVE

MINNA. FRANCISCA

MINNA. So that is your Sergeant, Francisca?

FRANCISCA. As for your jeering tone, — I have no time to take you to task again for saying *your* Sergeant. — Yes, my lady, that is my Sergeant. Without doubt you find him a little stiff and wooden. He almost seemed so, even to me, just now. But then I can see that he thought he had to mount parade before your ladyship. And when soldiers are on parade, — indeed, they seem more like wooden puppets than men. On the other hand, you should just see and hear him when he is himself.

MINNA. Indeed, I should have to.

FRANCISCA. He is probably in the parlor still. May I not go and chat with him a little?

MINNA. I am sorry to deny you this pleasure. You must remain here, Francisca. You must be present at our interview! — Something else just occurs to me. [*Drawing her ring from her finger.*] There, take my ring, keep it for me, and give me the Major's in place of it.

FRANCISCA. What is that for?

MINNA. [*while FRANCISCA fetches the other ring*]. I scarcely know myself; but I think I dimly foresee an occasion when I might need

it. — Someone is knocking. — Quick, give it here! [*Putting it on.*] It is he!

SCENE SIX

TELLHEIM [*in same costume, but otherwise as FRANCISCA desired*]. MINNA. FRANCISCA

TELLHEIM. My lady, you will pardon my delay —

MINNA. Oh, Major, we won't be so strictly military with each other. You are here now! And to await a pleasure is itself a pleasure. — Well? [*looking him smilingly in the face*] dear Tellheim, were we not children just now?

TELLHEIM. Yes, children indeed, Madam; children who resist when they should quietly obey.

MINNA. We are going to drive out, dear Major, — to view the city a little, — and afterwards to meet my uncle.

TELLHEIM. What?

MINNA. You see, we have been unable to tell each other even the most important of things. Yes, he is to arrive this very day. An accident is to blame for my arriving a day earlier without him.

TELLHEIM. The Count of Bruchsal? Is he back?

MINNA. The disturbances of the war frightened him away to Italy; the peace has brought him back again. — Do not be uneasy, Tellheim. Even though at that time we feared the strongest objection on his part to our union —

TELLHEIM. To our union?

MINNA. He is your friend. He has heard too much good of you from too many not to be so. He longs to know personally the man whom his only heiress has chosen. He comes as uncle, as guardian, as father to give me to you.

TELLHEIM. Ah, Madam, why did you not read my letter? Why would you not read it?

MINNA. Your letter? Yes, I remember, you sent me one. Tell me, how was it with this letter, Francisca? Did we read it, or did we not read it? What was it that you wrote to me, dear Tellheim? —

TELLHEIM. Nothing but what honor commands.

MINNA. That is, not to make an old maid of an honest girl who loves you. Certainly that is what honor commands. To be sure, I ought to have read the letter. But what I have not read, I am now hearing.

TELLHEIM. Yes, you shall hear it. —

MINNA. No, I do not even need to hear it. It is self-understood. Could you be capable of

such a hateful trick as not to want me now? Do you know that I should be disgraced for all my life? My countrywomen would point their fingers at me. — "That is she," they would say, "that is the Lady of Barnhelm, who imagined, because she was rich, that she could catch the worthy Tellheim. As though worthy men were to be had for money!" That's what they would say, for my countrywomen are all envious of me. That I am rich they cannot deny; but this they will not admit, that I am in other respects a tolerably good girl who is worthy of a good husband. Isn't that so, Tellheim?

TELLHEIM. Yes, yes, Madam, that is like your countrywomen. They will heartily envy you a discharged officer, wounded in his honor, a cripple, a beggar.

MINNA. And do you claim to be all that? I heard something of the kind, if I am not mistaken, already this morning. Your case is a mixture of bad features and good. Let us examine each more closely. — You are discharged? Such is my understanding. I thought your regiment had merely been redrafted. How did it happen that a man of your merits was not retained?

TELLHEIM. It happened, as happen it must. The mighty have arrived at the conviction that

a soldier will do very little out of regard for them, not much more from a sense of duty, but all for his own honor. How can they then consider themselves indebted to him? The peace has made more than one such as I unnecessary to them; and when all is said and done, no one is indispensable to them.

MINNA. You speak as a man must speak to whom, in his turn, the mighty are entirely unnecessary. And never were they more so than now. I owe the mighty a mighty gratitude for having abandoned their claims to a man whom after all I should have shared with them only with entire unwillingness. — I am your sovereign, Tellheim; you need no further master. — To find you discharged is a piece of luck I should scarcely have dared dream of! — Yet you are not merely discharged; you are something more. What more are you? A cripple, you said? Well, [*looking him over from head to foot*] the cripple is still fairly sound and straight, he seems still fairly healthy and sturdy. — My dear Tellheim, if you think to go abegging on the strength of your crippled limbs, I prophesy that you'll get alms at extremely few doors, except at the doors of good-hearted girls like myself.

TELLHEIM. Now I hear only the flippant girl, dear Minna.

MINNA. And I in your reproof hear only the "dear Minna." — I will be flippant no more. For I recollect that you are, after all, somewhat of a cripple. A shot has lamed your right arm a little. — Yet, everything well considered, even that is not so bad. I am all the more secure from your blows.

TELLHEIM. Madam!

MINNA. You mean: but you so much the less from mine. Well, well, dear Tellheim, I hope you will not let it come to that.

TELLHEIM. You are in a laughing frame of mind, Madam. I only regret that I cannot laugh with you.

MINNA. Why not? What have you to say against laughing? Cannot one laugh and still be very serious? Dear Major, laughing keeps us more reasonable than vexation. The proof lies before us. Your laughing friend judges your circumstances far more correctly than you do yourself. Because you are discharged you say that your honor is injured; because you have a shot in your arm you make yourself out a cripple. Is that right? Is that not an exaggeration? And is it my doing that all exaggerations are so open to ridicule? I wager that when I proceed to examine your beggarhood, it will stand the test just as badly. I take it you have

lost your equipage once, twice, three times; some of your capital may have vanished along with other deposits in the hands of this or that banker; you may have no hope of getting back this or that loan, advanced while in service; but are you therefore a beggar? Even if nothing is left you except what my uncle is bringing with him for you —

TELLHEIM. Your uncle, Madam, will bring nothing with him for me.

MINNA. Nothing but the two thousand pistoles which you so generously advanced to our government.

TELLHEIM. Ah, if you had only read my letter, Madam!

MINNA. Well then, I did read it. But what I read in it concerning this point is a perfect riddle to me. It is impossible that they can charge a noble action against you as though it were a crime. — Do explain to me, dear Major —

TELLHEIM. You will remember, Madam, that I had orders to collect in cash the contributions from the districts in your neighborhood, with the utmost rigor. I wished to spare myself this rigor, and advanced the deficiency myself. —

MINNA. Indeed I remember. — I loved you for this deed before I had even seen you.

TELLHEIM. The government gave me their note, and this I intended, at the conclusion of peace, to enter among the debts which were to be honoured. The note was recognized as valid, but my lawful ownership of it was disputed. They grinned scoffingly when I asserted that I had paid over the amount in cash. They declared it to be a bribe, a gratuity from the government, because I had agreed with them so soon upon the lowest sum — a sum that I was authorized to accept as full payment only in a case of the direst necessity. So the note left my hands, and if it is ever paid it certainly will not be paid to me. — Because of this, Madam, I regard my honor as injured; not because of my discharge, which I should have applied for if I had not received it. — You are serious, Madam? Why do you not laugh? Ha, ha, ha! Am I not laughing?

MINNA. Oh, stifle this laugh, Tellheim! I implore you! It is the terrible laugh of misanthropy! No, you are not the man to repent him of a good deed because it has had bad results for himself. No, it is impossible that these bad results can last. The truth must come to light. The testimony of my uncle, of our united government —

TELLHEIM. Of your uncle! Your government! Ha, ha, ha!

MINNA. Your laugh is killing me, Tellheim! If you believe in virtue and Providence, Tellheim, do not laugh like that! I have never heard cursing more terrible than your laughter. — And let us suppose the worst! If they are wholly determined to misjudge you here, among us you cannot be misjudged. No, we cannot, we shall not misjudge you, Tellheim. And if our government has the slightest feeling of honor, then I know what they must do. Yet I am foolish; what need of considering that? Just imagine, Tellheim, that you have lost the two thousand pistoles in a night of revelry. The King was an unlucky card for you; the Queen [*pointing to herself*] will be all the more propitious. — Believe me, Providence always indemnifies an honorable man, and very often even in advance. The deed which eventually was to cost you two thousand pistoles won me for you. Without this deed I should never have been eager to know you. You know, I went uninvited to the first party where I hoped to find you. I went only on your account. I went with the firm intention of loving you, — I loved you already! — with the firm determination of possessing you even if I should find you as black and ugly as the Moor of Venice. You are not so black and ugly; nor will you be so

jealous. But Tellheim, Tellheim, you nevertheless are very like him! Oh, these wild, inflexible men who ever fix their staring eyes only upon the phantom of honor! Who harden themselves against all other feeling!—Turn your eyes this way! Upon me, Tellheim! [*He, meanwhile, lost in thought and immovable, has been gazing with fixed eyes at one spot.*] What are you thinking of? Do you not hear me?

TELLHEIM. [*absently*]. Oh, yes! But tell me, Madam, how came the Moor to serve Venice? Had the Moor no fatherland? Why did he hire his arm and his blood to a foreign state?—

MINNA. [*terrified*]. Where are your thoughts, Tellheim?—It is time now for us to break off.—Come! [*Seizing him by the hand.*]—Francisca, have the carriage drive up.

TELLHEIM. [*tearing himself free from MINNA, and following FRANCISCA*]. No, Francisca; I cannot have the honor of accompanying her ladyship.—Madam, leave me in possession of my sound mind at least for to-day, and grant me leave to depart. You are in a fair way to deprive me of it. I resist as much as I can.—But because I am still in my right mind, hear, Madam, what I have firmly determined to do and from which nothing in the world shall move

me. — Unless a lucky throw is yet in store for me, unless my luck changes completely, unless —

MINNA. I must interrupt you, Major. — We should have told him at once, Francisca. Really, you never remind me of anything. — Our conversation would have turned out quite otherwise, Tellheim, if I had begun with the good news which the Chevalier de la Marliniere only this minute came to bring.

TELLHEIM. The Chevalier de la Marliniere? Who is he?

FRANCISCA. He may be a good enough man, Major, but for —

MINNA. Be quiet, Francisca! — Likewise a discharged officer, who from service in Holland —

TELLHEIM. Ah! Lieutenant Riccaut!

MINNA. He assured me that he was a friend of yours.

TELLHEIM. I assure you that I am none of his.

MINNA. And that some Minister or other had confided to him that your case was nearing the most favorable outcome. A personal letter from the King must be on the way to you —

TELLHEIM. How should Riccaut and a Minister get together? — However, something

certainly must have occurred in my affair. For just now the Paymaster declared to me that the King has quashed every charge that had been brought against me; and that I can retract my written word of honor not to leave here until I am fully exonerated. — But that is probably all there is to it. They are anxious to let me go. But they are mistaken; I shall not go. Rather shall the direst misery destroy me here before the eyes of my calumniators —

MINNA. Obstinate man!

TELLHEIM. I need no mercy; I demand justice. My honor —

MINNA. The honor of a man like you —

TELLHEIM. [*hotly*]. No, Madam, you may be able to judge well enough in all other matters, but not in this. Honor is not the voice of our conscience, not the testimony of a few upright persons —

MINNA. No, no, I know. — Honor is — honor.

TELLHEIM. In short, Madam, — you did not let me finish. — I was going to say: if they keep my own from me so shamefully, if my honor does not receive the most complete satisfaction, then, Madam, I cannot be yours. For in the eyes of the world I am not worthy of being yours. The Lady of Barnhelm deserves a

husband beyond reproach. That is a worthless love which does not hesitate to expose its object to contempt. He is an unworthy man who is not ashamed to owe his whole happiness to a woman whose blind tenderness —

MINNA. And that is your serious opinion, Major? [*Suddenly turning her back upon him.*] Francisca!

TELLHEIM. Do not be angry, Madam —

MINNA. [*aside to FRANCISCA*]. Now is the time! What do you advise me to do, Francisca? —

FRANCISCA. I advise nothing. But I admit he is taxing your patience a bit too much. —

TELLHEIM. [*coming to interrupt them*]. You are angry, Madam —

MINNA. [*scornfully*]. I? Not in the least.

TELLHEIM. If I loved you less, Madam —

MINNA. [*still in the same tone*]. Oh, of course, it would be my misfortune! — And look you, Major, I do not wish your misfortune either. — One must love quite unselfishly. — It's just as well that I have not been more frank! Perhaps your pity would have granted me what your love denies. — [*Slowly drawing the ring from her finger.*]

TELLHEIM. What do you mean by that, Madam?

MINNA. No, neither of us must make the other either more fortunate or more unfortunate. So true love wills it! I believe you, Major; and you have too high a sense of honor to misjudge love.

TELLHEIM. Are you mocking me, Madam?

MINNA. Here! Take back again the ring with which you plighted me your troth. [*Handing him the ring.*] So be it! Let it be as if we had never met.

TELLHEIM. What is this I hear?

MINNA. And does that surprise you? — Take it, sir. — You surely have not been merely putting on?

TELLHEIM. [*taking the ring from her hand*]. God! And can Minna speak so? —

MINNA. In *one* case you cannot be mine; in *no* case can I be yours. Your misfortune is probable; mine is certain. — Farewell! [*About to go.*]

TELLHEIM. Where are you going, dearest Minna?

MINNA. Sir, you insult me now with this familiar name.

TELLHEIM. What is the matter with you, dear lady? Where are you going?

MINNA. Let me go. — To hide my tears from you, traitor! [*Exit.*]

SCENE SEVEN

TELLHEIM. FRANCISCA

TELLHEIM. Her tears? Am I to let her go?
[*Starting after her.*]

FRANCISCA. [*holding him back*]. Not so, Major! Surely you would not follow her to her bedroom?

TELLHEIM. Her misfortune? Did she not speak of misfortune?

FRANCISCA. Why, to be sure: the misfortune of losing you, after —

TELLHEIM. After? After what? There is something more behind all this. What is it, Francisca? Speak, tell me —

FRANCISCA. After she, I was going to say, — has sacrificed so much for you.

TELLHEIM. Sacrificed for me?

FRANCISCA. Listen, I'll explain in a word. — It is very well for you, Major, that you are rid of her in this way. — Why should I not tell you? It cannot remain a secret longer, anyway. — We have run away! — The Count of Bruchsal has disinherited her ladyship because she would accept no husband of his choice. Hereupon everybody turned away from her, despised her. What were we to do? We decided to seek for him whom we —

TELLHEIM. It is enough! — Come, I must throw myself at her feet.

FRANCISCA. What are you thinking of? Rather go and thank your good fortune —

TELLHEIM. Wretch! What do you take me for? — No, dear Francisca, that counsel did not come from your heart. Forgive my anger!

FRANCISCA. Do not detain me any longer. I must see what she is doing. How easily something may have happened to her. — Go! But you had better come back again, if you like to come back. [*Follows her mistress.*]

SCENE EIGHT

TELLHEIM

TELLHEIM. But, Francisca! — Oh, I will wait for you both here! — No, this is more urgent! If she sees that I am in earnest, she cannot refuse me her pardon. — Now I need you, honest Werner! — No, Minna, I am no traitor! —
[*Exit in haste.*]

End of Act Four

*Admission
500.00
Kearney*

ACT FIVE

SCENE ONE

[The scene is laid in the parlor]

[Enter TELLHEIM from one side and WERNER from the other]

TELLHEIM. Ha, Werner! I have been looking for you everywhere. Where have you been keeping yourself?

WERNER. And I was seeking you, Major; that's always the way. — I bring you news that's ever so good.

TELLHEIM. Ah, I do not need your news now, I need your money. Quick, Werner, give me as much as you have and then raise as much as you can.

WERNER. Major? — Now, by my poor soul, didn't I tell you so? "He will want to borrow money from me when he himself has some to lend."

TELLHEIM. I hope you are not looking for excuses?

WERNER. That I may have nothing to reproach him with, he takes it from me with the

right hand and gives it back to me with the left.

TELLHEIM. Do not delay me, Werner! — I have good intentions of returning it to you; but when or how — God alone knows!

WERNER. Then you do not know yet that the royal treasury has orders to pay you your money? I have just learned it from —

TELLHEIM. What nonsense are you talking? What won't you swallow next? Don't you see that if it were true I should surely be the first to know it? — In short, Werner, money! money!

WERNER. Why, very well, with pleasure! here is some! — Here are the hundred louis d'or, and here the hundred ducats. — [*Giving him both.*]

TELLHEIM. This hundred louis d'or, Werner, go and take to Just. He is to redeem at once the ring which he pawned this morning. — But where will you get more, Werner? — I need much more.

WERNER. Leave that to me. — The man who has bought my farm lives in town. Quarter day does not come round till a fortnight hence, to be sure; but the money is lying ready, and a nice little discount of half of one per cent —

TELLHEIM. Why, yes, dear Werner! — You see that I have recourse to you only? —

Well, I'll have to confide all to you. The young lady here, — you have seen her, — is unfortunate —

WERNER. Oh, what a pity!

TELLHEIM. But to-morrow she will be my wife —

WERNER. Oh, joy!

TELLHEIM. And the day after I am going away with her. I may go; I will go. Rather leave everything here in the lurch! Who knows where else some good fortune may not be in store for me. If you wish, Werner, do you come along. We will take active service again.

WERNER. Really? — But where there is war, I hope, Major?

TELLHEIM. Where else? — Go, dear Werner, we will speak more of this later.

WERNER. Oh, dearest Major! — The day after to-morrow? Why not rather to-morrow? — Trust me to have everything ready. — In Persia, Major, there is a first-class war; what do you say?

TELLHEIM. We will consider it; now go, Werner! —

WERNER. Hurrah! Long live Prince Herac-
lius! [Exit.]

SCENE TWO

TELLHEIM

TELLHEIM. What has come over me? — My whole soul has received a new impulse. My own misfortune struck me down, made me fretful, shortsighted, timid, indolent; her misfortune elevates me; I look about me freely again, and feel myself willing and strong to undertake everything for her — Why do I linger? [*Starts towards MINNA'S room out of which FRANCISCA comes towards him.*]

SCENE THREE

FRANCISCA. TELLHEIM

FRANCISCA. So it is really you? — I thought I heard your voice. — What do you want, Major von Tellheim?

TELLHEIM. What do I want? — What is your mistress doing? — Come! —

FRANCISCA. She is this minute going for a drive.

TELLHEIM. And alone? Without me? Where to?

FRANCISCA. Have you forgotten, Major?

TELLHEIM. Have you no sense, Francisca? — I annoyed her, and she became touchy. I shall ask her forgiveness, and she will forgive me.

FRANCISCA. What? — After taking the ring back, Major?

TELLHEIM. Ha! — That I did in my confusion. — Now for the first time do I remember the ring again. — Where did I put it? — [*Searching for it.*] Here it is.

FRANCISCA. Is that it? [*Aside, as he puts it away again.*] If he would only look at it more closely!

TELLHEIM. She forced it upon me with a bitterness that — Why, I have already forgotten this bitterness. A full heart cannot weigh words. — But I know that she will not for a moment refuse to accept the ring again. — And have I not hers still?

FRANCISCA. That she expects back in exchange. — Where is it, Major? Do show it to me.

TELLHEIM. [*somewhat embarrassed*]. I have — forgotten to put it on. Just — Just is going to bring it to me directly.

FRANCISCA. One is very much like the other, I suppose; do let me see this one; I just love to see such things.

TELLHEIM. Another time, Francisca. Now come —

FRANCISCA. [*aside*]. He simply refuses to be shown his mistake.

TELLHEIM. What are you saying? Mistake?

FRANCISCA. It is a mistake, I say, if you think her ladyship is still a good match. Her own fortune is far from considerable; by a somewhat selfish accounting her guardians could reduce it to nothing. She expected everything from her uncle; but this cruel uncle —

TELLHEIM. Let him be! — Am I not man enough to make everything up to her someday? —

FRANCISCA. Do you hear? She is ringing; I must go in.

TELLHEIM. I am going with you.

FRANCISCA. For Heaven's sake, no! She has expressly forbidden me to speak to you. At least let me see her first. — [*Goes in.*]

SCENE FOUR

TELLHEIM

TELLHEIM. [*calling after her*]. Announce me to her! — Speak for me, Francisca! — I will follow you presently! — What shall I say to her? — Where the heart may speak, no preparation is needed. — There's just one thing that might require a studied turn: her reserve, her hesitation to throw herself, unfortunate as she is, into my arms; her zeal in pretending to

have a happiness which she has lost because of me. To excuse this distrust of my honor, of her own value, in her own eyes, in her own — for in *my* eyes it is already excused! — Ha! Here she comes. —

SCENE FIVE

MINNA. FRANCISCA. TELLHEIM

MINNA. [*stepping out, as if she were not aware of the Major*]. You are sure the carriage is at the door, Francisca? — My fan! —

TELLHEIM. [*approaching her*]. Where are you going, Madam?

MINNA. [*with affected coldness*]. Out, Major. — I can guess why you have taken the trouble to return here once more: to give me back my ring in exchange for your own. — Very well, sir; just have the goodness to turn it over to Francisca. — Francisca, relieve the Major of that ring! — I have no time to lose. [*Is going.*]

TELLHEIM. [*stepping in front of her*]. Madam! Ah, Madam, the things I have learned! I was not worthy of so much love.

MINNA. What, Francisca? You have revealed to the Major —

FRANCISCA. Everything.

TELLHEIM. Do not be angry with me, Madam. I am no traitor. You have lost much for my sake in the eyes of the world, but not in mine. In my eyes you have gained infinitely through this loss. It was still too new to you; you feared that it might make an all too unfavorable impression upon me; so you wished to conceal it from me for the present. I do not complain of this distrust. It arose from the desire to retain me. This desire is my pride. You found me unfortunate, too, and you would not heap misfortune upon misfortune. You could not divine how greatly your misfortune would help me over my own.

MINNA. All very well, Major! But it is all over now. I have released you from your obligations; by taking back the ring you have —

TELLHEIM. Consented to nothing! — Rather I now consider myself more bound to you than ever. — You are mine, Minna, mine for ever. [*Drawing out the ring.*] Here, accept for the second time the pledge of my troth —

MINNA. I take this ring again? This ring?

TELLHEIM. Yes, dearest Minna, yes!

MINNA. What are you asking of me? to take this ring?

TELLHEIM. You took this ring from my hand for the first time when our circumstances

were alike and fortunate. They are fortunate no longer, but are alike again. Equality is ←
always the firmest bond of love. — Permit me,
dearest Minna! — [*Seizes her hand, in order to*
put the ring on.]

MINNA. What? By force, Major? — No, there is no power in the world which shall compel me to accept this ring again! — Do you think, perchance, that I am in want of a ring? — Oh, you can see well enough [*pointing to her ring*] that I have another here which is not in the least inferior to yours! —

FRANCISCA. Well, if he does not see it now! —

TELLHEIM. [*releasing MINNA's hand*]. What is this? — I see the Lady of Barnhelm, but I don't hear her. — You are putting on, Madam. — Forgive me, if I repeat your own expression.

MINNA. Did this word offend you, Major?

TELLHEIM. It hurt me.

MINNA. [*moved*]. It was not intended to, Tellheim. — Forgive me, Tellheim.

TELLHEIM. Ha, this familiar tone tells me that you are returning to your true self, Madam; that you love me still, Minna. —

FRANCISCA. [*blurting out*]. And soon the joke would have gone too far, too. —

MINNA. [*imperiously*]. Mind your own busi-

ness and do not meddle with our affairs, Francisca, if you please!

FRANCISCA. [*aside and perplexed*]. Not enough yet?

MINNA. Yes, sir, it would be feminine vanity to feign coldness and scorn. Away with it all! You deserve to find me just as honest as you are yourself. — I love you still, Tellheim, I love you still; but in spite of that —

TELLHEIM. Say no more, dearest Minna, say no more! [*Seizing her hand again, to put on the ring.*]

MINNA. [*drawing back her hand*]. In spite of that, — nay, all the more reason for me not to permit this on any consideration; not on any! — What are you thinking of, Major? — I thought your own distress might be enough for you. — You must remain here; you must obtain the most complete satisfaction — by sheer defiance — I think of no other word on the spur of the moment. — Defiance, even if in pursuance of this course the most extreme misery should consume you before the eyes of your calumniators!

TELLHEIM. So I thought, so I said, when I did not know what I was thinking and saying. Chagrin and suppressed rage had beclouded my whole mind; Love, herself, in the fullest splendor

of happiness, was not able to light it up. But she sends her daughter, Sympathy, who, more familiar with dark sorrow, scatters the mists and opens again all the avenues of my soul to feelings of tenderness. The impulse of self-preservation awakes when I have something more precious than myself to preserve, and to preserve through my own exertions. Let not the word sympathy offend you, my lady. From the innocent cause of our distress we can hear it without humiliation. I am this cause; through me, Minna, you lost friends and relations, fortune and country. Through me, in me, you must find them all again, or I shall have the destruction of the most lovable of your sex upon my conscience. Let me not picture a future where I must hate myself. — No, nothing shall keep me here longer. From this moment on I will oppose nothing but contempt to the injustice which meets me here. Is this country the world? Does the sun rise here alone? Where may I not go? In what service shall I be refused? Even should I have to seek it in the remotest clime: follow me with confidence, dearest Minna; we shall want for nothing. — I have a friend who will gladly assist me. —

SCENE SIX

ENVOY. TELLHEIM. MINNA. FRANCISCA

FRANCISCA. [*perceiving the envoy*]. Hist! Major!

TELLHEIM. [*to the envoy*]. Whom do you want?

ENVOY. I am looking for Major von Tellheim. — Ah, you are the Major himself, I see. Major von Tellheim, I am to deliver to you this personal missive from the King. [*Which he takes from his portfolio.*]

TELLHEIM. To me?

ENVOY. In accordance with the direction —

MINNA. Francisca, do you hear? — The Chevalier spoke the truth after all!

ENVOY. [*as TELLHEIM takes the letter*]. I beg pardon, Major: you should have received it yesterday; but it was impossible for me to find out your address. Only to-day, at the dress parade, did I learn your place of residence from Lieutenant Riccaut.

FRANCISCA. My lady, do you hear? — That is the Chevalier's Minister — "Vat is ze name of ze Minister out zere on ze beeg place?" —

TELLHEIM. I am very much obliged to you for your trouble.

ENVOY. It is my duty, Major. [*Exit.*]

SCENE SEVEN

TELLHEIM. MINNA. FRANCISCA

TELLHEIM. Ah, Madam, what have I here?
What does this writing contain?

MINNA. I am not entitled to extend my
curiosity so far.

TELLHEIM. What? You still separate my
fate from yours? — But why do I hesitate to
open it? — It cannot make me unhappier than
I am; no, dearest Minna, it cannot make us
unhappier, — but perchance happier! — Will
you permit me, Madam! [*Breaks the seal and
reads the letter, the LANDLORD meanwhile coming
stealthily upon the scene.*]

SCENE EIGHT

LANDLORD. MINNA. FRANCISCA.

LANDLORD. [*to FRANCISCA*]. Hist! my dear!
just a word!

FRANCISCA. [*approaching him*]. Mr. Land-
lord? — I assure you, we do not yet know our-
selves what is in the letter.

LANDLORD. Who wants to know about the
letter? — I come on account of the ring. Her
ladyship must return it to me at once. Just
has come, he has orders to redeem it again.

MINNA. [*who meanwhile has also approached the LANDLORD*]. You may tell Just that it is already redeemed; and you may tell him by whom: by me.

LANDLORD. But —

MINNA. I take it all upon myself; you may go.
[*Exit LANDLORD.*]

SCENE NINE

TELLHEIM. MINNA. FRANCISCA

FRANCISCA. And now, my lady, let us have done tormenting the poor Major.

MINNA. Oh, bother your pleadings! As if the knot would not soon have to untie itself.

TELLHEIM. [*after he has read, with the liveliest emotion*]. Ah! Herein too he has shown his true self! — Oh, Madam, what sense of justice! — What graciousness! — This is more than I expected! — More than I deserve! — My fortune, my honor, all is re-established! — Surely I am not dreaming? [*Glancing again through the letter, as if to convince himself once more.*] No, no delusion born of my desires! — Read it yourself, Madam; read it yourself!

MINNA. I am not so presuming, Major.

TELLHEIM. Presuming? The letter is to me,

to your Tellheim, Minna. It contains, — what your uncle cannot take from you. You must read it; do read it!

MINNA. If my doing so gives you pleasure, Major — [*She takes the letter and reads.*] “My dear Major von Tellheim!

“I herewith inform you that the affair which made me anxious for your honor has been cleared up in your favor. My brother was informed as to the particulars, and his testimony has declared you to be more than innocent. The state treasury has orders to restore to you the note in question, and to pay the sums advanced; moreover, I have ordered that all charges brought against you by the auditors be quashed. Let me know whether your state of health permits you to take active service again. I would not willingly dispense with a man of your valor and noble sentiments. I am your gracious King, etc.”

TELLHEIM. Well, what do you say to that, Madam?

MINNA. [*as she folds the letter again and gives it back.*] I? Nothing.

TELLHEIM. Nothing?

MINNA. Yes, one thing: that your King, who is a great man, may likewise be a good man.— But what is that to me? He is not my King.

TELLHEIM. And you have nothing else to say? Nothing in regard to ourselves?

MINNA. You will enter his service again; the Major will become Lieutenant-Colonel, perhaps Colonel. My hearty congratulations.

TELLHEIM. And do you not know me better than that? — No, since fortune gives me back what is sufficient to satisfy the wishes of a reasonable man, it shall depend solely upon my Minna whether I am again to belong to anyone but her. To her service alone let my whole life be dedicated! The service of the great is dangerous and does not repay the trouble, the restraint, the humiliation which it costs. Minna is not one of those vain women who love in their husbands only the title and the position of honor. She will love me for my own sake; and for her I shall forget the whole world. I became soldier out of partisanship, for what political principles I myself am ignorant, and from the whimsical feeling that it is well for every honest man to try himself out in this profession for a time, in order to familiarize himself with every sort of danger, and to acquire coolness and determination. Only the utmost necessity could have compelled me to make a permanent vocation of this experiment, a fixed profession of this incidental occupation. But

now that nothing compels me any more, now it is my whole ambition once more simply and solely to be a peaceful and contented man. Such, with you, dearest, I shall infallibly become; and such in your companionship I shall unalterably remain. — To-morrow let the holiest bond unite us; and then we will look about us, and seek in the whole wide inhabited world the quietest, most cheerful, most smiling nook, which to be Paradise only lacks a happy pair. There we will dwell; there shall each of our days — what is the matter, Madam? [*To MINNA, who turns restlessly this way and that, and endeavors to hide her emotion.*]

MINNA. [*composing herself*]. You are very cruel, Tellheim, to show me such an enticing picture of a happiness which I must renounce. My loss —

TELLHEIM. Your loss? — What do you call your loss? Everything that Minna could lose is not the real Minna. You are still the sweetest, best, most lovable, most charming creature under the sun; all goodness and generosity, all innocence and joy! — Now and then a little wilfulness; here and there a bit of obstinacy — all the better! all the better! Minna otherwise would be an angel, whom I should

have to worship with trembling, whom I could not love. [*Seizing her hand, to kiss it.*]

→ MINNA. [*withdrawing her hand*]. Not so, sir! — What a change all at once! — Is this flattering, impetuous lover the cold Tellheim? — Could only his restored fortune set him in this flame? — He must permit me, in his feverish ardor, to retain reason for both of us. — When he himself could reason, I heard him say that it was a worthless love which did not hesitate to expose its object to contempt. — Right; but I aspire to as pure and noble a love as he. — Now, when honor calls him, when a great monarch courts him, am I to consent to his abandoning himself to lovesick reveries in my company? To the degeneration of the famous warrior into a dallying swain? — No, Major, follow the call of your better destiny. —

D. TELLHEIM. Well then! If the great world is more fascinating to you, Minna, — so be it! Let the great world keep us! — How small, how paltry is this great world! — You know it so far only on its tinsel side. But surely, Minna, you will — very well! Until then, very well! Your charms shall not lack admirers, nor shall my happiness be without enviers.

MINNA. No, Tellheim, that was not what I meant! I point you back into the great world,

upon the path of honor, without wishing to follow you thither. — There Tellheim needs a wife who is beyond reproach. A runaway girl from Saxony who has thrown herself at his head —

TELLHEIM. [*starting up and looking wildly about him*]. Who dares to speak so? — Ah, Minna, I am terrified at myself when I imagine that some one else beside you had said this. My rage against him would be without bounds.

MINNA. You see! That is just what I am afraid of. You would not suffer the least mockery of me, and yet you would daily have to swallow the bitterest. — In brief, then, Tellheim, hear what I have firmly determined, and from which nothing in the world shall move me. —

TELLHEIM. Before you finish speaking, Madam, — I implore you, Minna! — reflect a moment longer, that you are about to pronounce sentence of life or death on me! —

MINNA. Without any further reflection! — As surely as I have given you back the ring with which you once plighted me your troth, as surely as you took back this same ring, so surely shall the unfortunate Minna never be the wife of the more fortunate Tellheim!

TELLHEIM. And herewith you pronounce my condemnation, Madam?

MINNA. Equality is the only firm bond of love! — The fortunate Minna desired to live only for the fortunate Tellheim. Even Minna in misfortune would finally have let herself be persuaded, whether it be to increase or to assuage the misfortune of her friend through herself. — He surely must have noticed before the arrival of this letter, which again destroys all equality between us, how at the last I was only pretending to refuse.

TELLHEIM. Is that true, Madam? I thank you, Minna, for not having yet pronounced my condemnation. — You will have only the unfortunate Tellheim? He is to be had. [*Coldly.*] This instant I perceive that it is indecorous for me to accept this tardy justice; that it will be better to make no demand whatever for the return of what has been dishonored by so shameful a suspicion. — Yes, it shall be as if I had never received the letter. Let that be my sole answer and reaction to it. [*About to tear it up.*]

MINNA. [*seizing his hands*]. What are you going to do, Tellheim?

TELLHEIM. Call you mine.

MINNA. Stop!

TELLHEIM. Madam, it shall be torn without fail if you do not quickly take back your

words. — After that we will see what other objections against me will be left to you!

MINNA. What? In this tone? — Then shall I, must I, become contemptible in my own eyes? Never! She is an unworthy creature who is not ashamed to owe her entire happiness to the blind tenderness of a man.

TELLHEIM. False, utterly false!

MINNA. Do you dare to find fault with your own expression when it comes from my lips?

TELLHEIM. You sophist! Does the weaker sex dishonor itself, then, by everything that does not become the stronger? Shall man be licensed to do anything that befits woman? Which of the two did nature appoint as the support of the other? C semit

MINNA. Calm yourself, Tellheim! — I shall not be wholly without protection, even if I must decline the honor of yours. At all events, I am sure of making both ends meet. I have reported my arrival to our Minister. He wishes to receive me this very day. I hope he will assist me. Time is flying. Permit me, Major —

TELLHEIM. I shall accompany you, Madam.

MINNA. Not so, Major; leave me —

TELLHEIM. Sooner shall your shadow leave you! Come, Madam; where you will; to whom

you will. Everywhere, to acquaintances and strangers, I will tell in your presence, a hundred times a day, what bonds unite you to me, out of what cruel caprice you wish to sever these bonds. —

SCENE TEN

JUST. TELLHEIM. MINNA. FRANCISCA.

JUST. [*impetuously*]. Major! Major!

TELLHEIM. Well?

JUST. Do come, quick, quick!

TELLHEIM. What is wanted of me? Come here to me! Speak, what is it?

JUST. Just listen. — [*Whispering secretly in his ear.*]

MINNA. [*at the same time, in a stage whisper to FRANCISCA*]. Do you begin to understand, Francisca?

FRANCISCA. Oh, you heartless creature! I have been on tenterhooks!

TELLHEIM. [*to JUST*]. What do you say? — That is not possible! — She? [*Looking fiercely at MINNA*]. — Say it aloud; say it to her face! — Just listen, Madam! —

JUST. The landlord says that the Lady of Barnhelm has taken possession of the ring which I pawned to him; she recognized it as her own and will not give it up again. —

TELLHEIM. Is that true, Madam? — No, that cannot be true!

MINNA. [*smiling*]. And why not, Tellheim? — Why can it not be true?

TELLHEIM. [*violently*]. Well, let it be true, then! — What terrible light suddenly breaks upon me! — Now I know you, — false, faith- ←
less one!

MINNA. [*terrified*]. Who? Who is this faithless one?

TELLHEIM. You, whom I will never name again!

MINNA. Tellheim!

TELLHEIM. Forget my name! — You came here to break with me. It is clear! — Oh, that chance should so willingly come to the aid of the faithless! It brought your ring into your hands. Your arrant cunning contrived to palm my own off on me.

MINNA. Tellheim, what visions are you seeing? Pull yourself together and listen to me.

FRANCISCA. [*aside*]. Now let her catch it!

SCENE ELEVEN

WERNER [*with a purse of gold*]. TELLHEIM.

MINNA. FRANCISCA. JUST

WERNER. Here I am again, Major —

TELLHEIM. [*without looking at him*]. Who wants you?

WERNER. Here is money, a thousand pistoles!

TELLHEIM. I don't want them!

WERNER. To-morrow, Major, you can have as much again at your disposal.

TELLHEIM. Keep your money!

WERNER. Why, it is your money, Major. — I don't believe you know to whom you are talking.

TELLHEIM. Away with it, I say.

WERNER. What is the matter with you? — I am Werner.

✓ TELLHEIM. All goodness is hypocrisy! All kindness is deceit.

WERNER. Is that meant for me?

TELLHEIM. As you like!

WERNER. I have only carried out your orders. —

TELLHEIM. Then carry out this one too, and be off!

WERNER. Major! [*Peevishly*]. I am a person —

TELLHEIM. That's something to boast of!

WERNER. Who is not without a temper —

TELLHEIM. Good! Temper is the best thing we have, in the end.

WERNER. I beg you, Major —

TELLHEIM. How often am I to tell you? I do not need your money!

WERNER. [*in a rage*]. Well, let him use it who wants to! [*Throwing the purse at his feet and stepping aside.*]

MINNA. [*to FRANCISCA*]. Ah, dear Francisca, I should have followed your advice. I have carried the joke too far. — Yet he has only to listen to me — [*approaching him*].

FRANCISCA. [*approaching WERNER, without answering her mistress*]. Sergeant! —

WERNER. [*sulkily*]. Go away! —

FRANCISCA. Whew! What contrary men!

MINNA. Tellheim! — Tellheim! [*In his fury he bites his finger nails, turns his face away and hears nothing.*] No, this goes too far! — Do listen to me! — You are deceiving yourself! — A mere misunderstanding, — Tellheim! — Will you not listen to your Minna? — How can you harbor such a suspicion? — I wish to break with you? — I come here for that purpose? — Tellheim!

SCENE TWELVE

TWO SERVANTS, *successively, running from opposite sides across the parlor.* THE OTHERS

1ST. SERVANT. Your ladyship, his Excellency the Count! —

2ND. SERVANT. He is coming, your ladyship! —

FRANCISCA. [*who has run to the window*]. It is he! It is he!

MINNA. Is it he? — Oh, quickly now, Tellheim —

TELLHEIM. [*all at once coming to himself*]. Who? Who is coming? Your uncle, Madam? This cruel uncle? — Just let him come! Just let him come! — Fear nothing! He shall not be permitted to insult you by a glance! He shall have me to deal with. — To be sure, you don't deserve it of me —

MINNA. Quick, Tellheim, embrace me, and forget it all —

TELLHEIM. Ha, if I did but know that you could regret it! —

MINNA. No, I cannot regret having obtained an insight into your whole heart! — Ah, what a man you are! — Embrace your Minna, your happy Minna! But in nothing so happy as in the possession of you! [*Falls into his embrace.*] And now to meet him! —

TELLHEIM. To meet whom?

MINNA. The best of your unknown friends.

TELLHEIM. What?

MINNA. The Count, my uncle, my father, your father. — My flight, his anger, my dis-

inheritance:—don't you understand that it was all a fiction?—Oh you credulous knight!

TELLHEIM. A fiction?—But the ring? the ring?

MINNA. Where is the ring which I returned to you?

TELLHEIM. You will accept it again?—Oh, then I am happy!—Here, Minna!—*[drawing it forth.]*

MINNA. But look at it first!—Oh, the blind who will not see!—Which ring is it, tell me? That which I had from you or that which you had from me?—Is it not indeed the one which I would not leave in the hands of the landlord?

TELLHEIM. Heavens! What is this I see? What is this I hear?

MINNA. Now shall I take it again? Shall I?—Give it here, give it here! *[Snatches it out of his hand and puts it upon his finger herself.]* Now, is everything all right?

TELLHEIM. Where am I?—*[Kissing her hand.]* Oh you malicious angel!—to torment me so!

MINNA. This as a proof, my dear husband, that you shall never play me a trick but that I shall play one like it on the spot.—Do you think that you did not torment me also?

TELLHEIM. Oh, you actresses, I should have known you better.

FRANCISCA. No, forsooth; I am spoilt for an actress. I was trembling and shaking, and had to hold my hand over my mouth.

MINNA. My part did not come easy, either. — But now come along!

TELLHEIM. I have not recovered myself yet. — How happy, yet how perplexed I feel! It is like awakening suddenly from a terrible dream!

MINNA. We are losing time. — I hear him already.

SCENE THIRTEEN

THE COUNT OF BRUCHSALL, *accompanied by*
VARIOUS SERVANTS *and the* LANDLORD.
THE REST AS BEFORE.

COUNT. [*on entering*]. She arrived safely, I hope?

MINNA. [*springing towards him*]. Ah, my father!

COUNT. Here I am, dear Minna! [*Embracing her.*] But what is this, my girl? [*As he becomes aware of TELLHEIM's presence.*] Only four and twenty hours here, and already acquainted and in company?

MINNA. Guess who it is.

COUNT. Surely not your Tellheim?

MINNA. Who but he? — Come, Tellheim!
Leading him up to the COUNT.]

COUNT. Sir, we have never met, but at the first glance I thought I recognized you. I hoped that you might be the man. — Embrace me. — You have my complete esteem. I beg you to be my friend. — My niece, my daughter, loves you —

MINNA. You know it, my father! — And is my love blind?

COUNT. No, Minna; your love is not blind, but your lover — is — dumb. *(A stupid son.)*

TELLHEIM. *[throwing himself into his arms].*
 Let me come to myself, my father!

COUNT. Right, my son! I perceive that even if your tongue keeps silent, your heart is able to speak. — As a general thing I do not care much for officers of this color *[pointing to TELLHEIM's uniform]*. Yet you are an honest man, Tellheim; and no matter what garb an honest man be in, one has to love him.

MINNA. Oh, if you knew all! —

COUNT. What is to hinder my learning all? — Where are my rooms, landlord?

LANDLORD. Will your Excellency just do me the favor to step in here?

COUNT. Come, Minna! Come, Major!
[Exit with the LANDLORD and SERVANTS.]

MINNA. Come, Tellheim!

TELLHEIM. I will follow you in a moment, dear lady. Just a word first with this man! [*Turning to WERNER.*]

MINNA. And let it be a very good one, please; I think you owe it to him. — Don't you think so, Francisca? [*Follows the COUNT.*]

SCENE FOURTEEN

TELLHEIM. WERNER. JUST. FRANCISCA

TELLHEIM. [*pointing to the purse which WERNER had thrown down*]. Here, Just! — Pick up the purse and take it home. Go! — [*Exit JUST, with the purse.*]

WERNER. [*who all this time has been sulking in a corner, apparently indifferent to everything; upon hearing the last words*]. — Well now!

TELLHEIM. [*approaching him in a friendly manner*]. Werner, when can I have the other thousand pistoles?

WERNER. [*all at once in his usual good humor again*]. To-morrow, Major, to-morrow. —

TELLHEIM. I do not need to become your debtor, but I will be your banker. All you good-hearted people should have guardians set over you. You are in a manner spendthrifts. — I made you angry just now, Werner! —

WERNER. 'Pon my poor soul, yes! — But I ought not to have been such a dolt. Now indeed I see it. I deserved a hundred stripes. Let me have them too, for all I care; only bear me no further grudge, dear Major! —

TELLHEIM. Grudge? — [*Pressing his hand.*] Read in my eyes all that I cannot say to you. — Ha! I should like to see the man who has a better sweetheart and an honest friend than I have. — Isn't it so, Francisca? [*Exit.*]

SCENE FIFTEEN

FRANCISCA. [*aside.*] Yes, indeed, this man is ever so good! — Such an one will never come my way again. — It must out! [*shily and shamefacedly approaching WERNER.*] Sergeant! —

WERNER. [*who is wiping his eyes.*] Well? —

FRANCISCA. Sergeant —

WERNER. Well, what do you want, little woman?

FRANCISCA. Just look at me, Sergeant. —

WERNER. I cannot yet; something or other is in my eyes.

FRANCISCA. Will you not please look at me?

WERNER. I fear I have already looked at you too much, little woman! — There, now I see you! Well, what's the matter?

FRANCISCA. Sergeant, — don't you need a Mrs. Sergeant?

WERNER. Are you in earnest, little woman?

FRANCISCA. Most fully!

WERNER. And would you even go along to Persia?

FRANCISCA. Wherever you like!

WERNER. Really? — Hullo! Major! No boasting! Now I have at least as good a sweetheart and as honest a friend as you! — Give me your hand, little woman! It's a bargain! — In ten years' time you will be a general's wife, — or a widow!

The End





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